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—
MILLE.
DE
LA FAYETTE

BALTIMORE

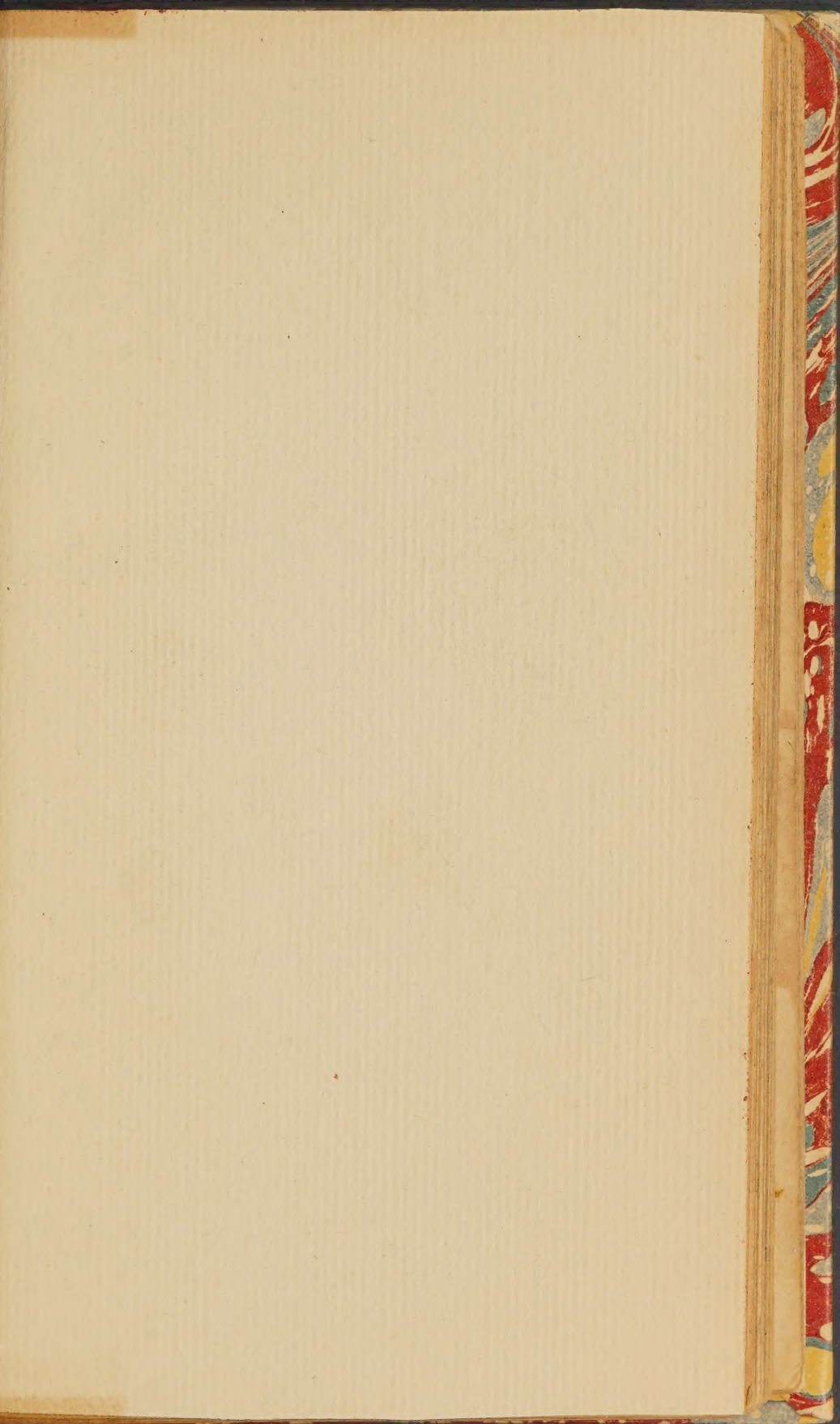
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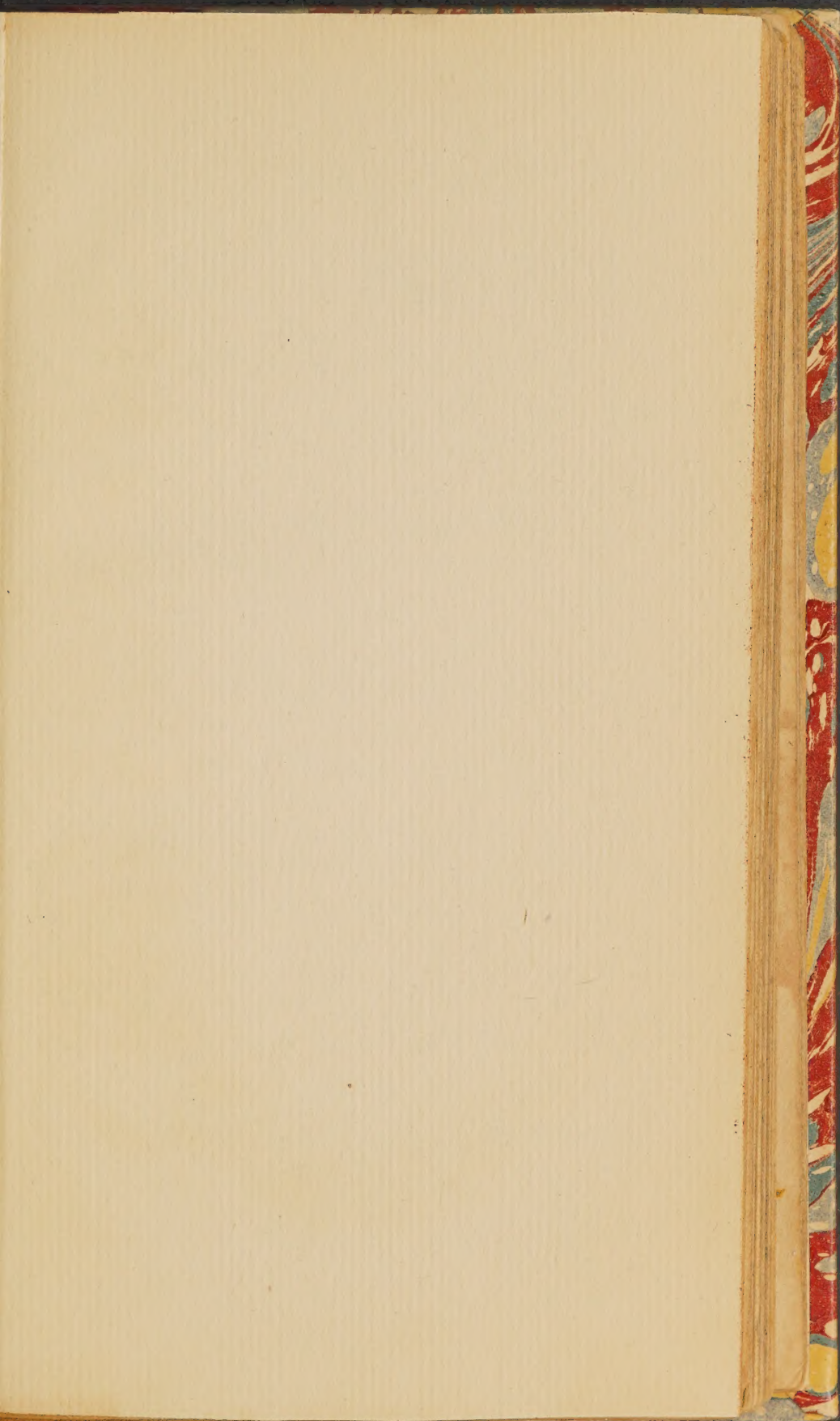




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MADemoiselle

DE LA FAYETTE,

AN HISTORICAL NOVEL,

ILLUSTRATING

THE CHARACTER AND MANNERS

OF THE

COURT OF LOUIS XIII.

S. F.

BY MADAME DE GENLIS.

.....
TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.
.....

First American Edition revised, with additional Notes.

VOLUME I.

BALTIMORE :

Published by Edward J. Coale ; and by Eastburn, Kirk, & Co. New-York ;
and Mathew Carey, Philadelphia.

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.....
1814,

DISTRICT OF MARYLAND, ss 702:

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on this eleventh day of February, in the thirty-eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Edward J. Coale, of the said district, hath deposited

* Seal. * in this office, the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as
***** proprietor, in the words and figures following, to wit:—

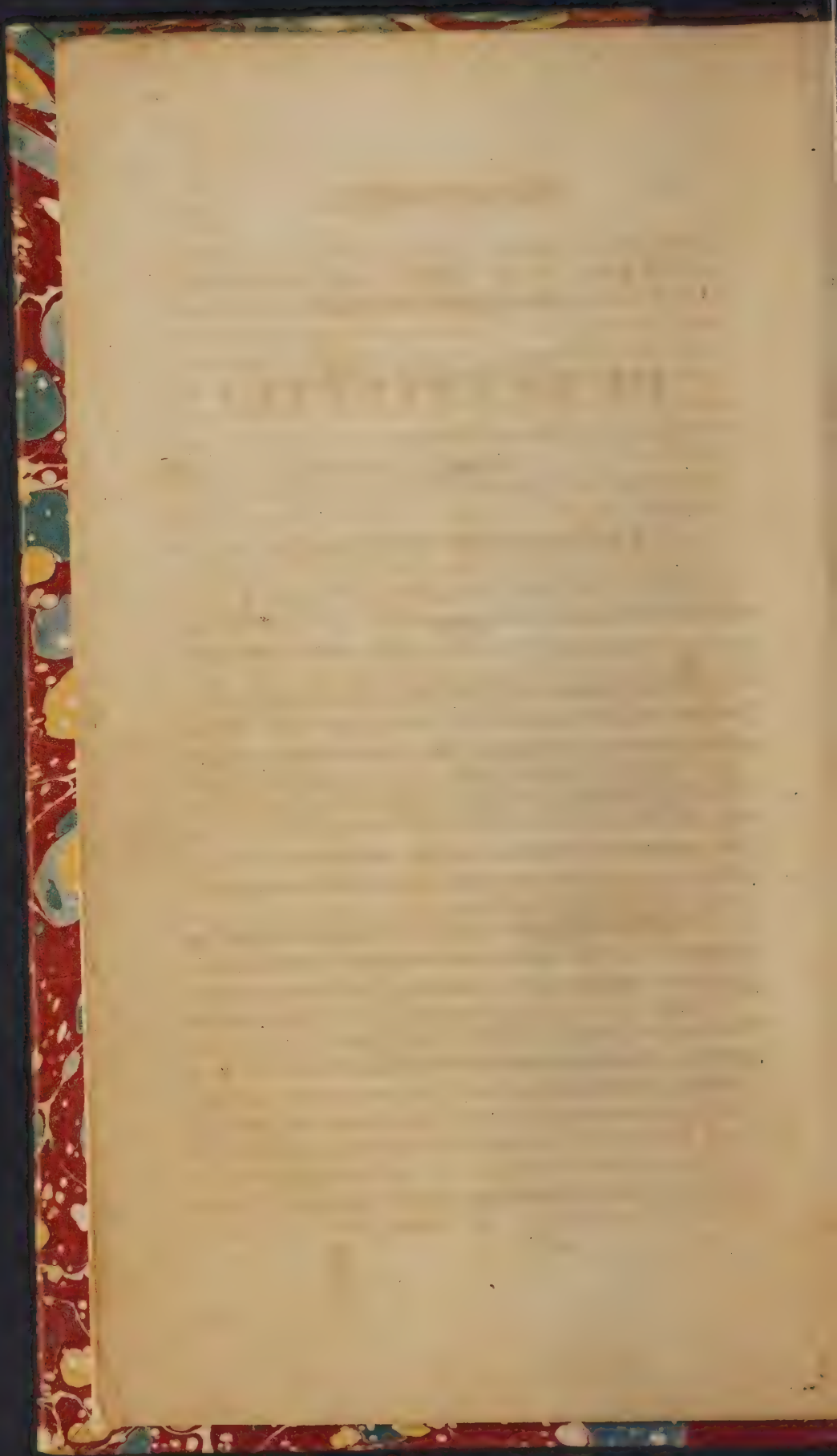
" Mademoiselle de la Fayette, an Historical Novel, illustrating the
" Character and Manners of the Court of Louis XIII. by Madame de Genlis.
" —Two volumes in one—First American Edition revised, with additional
" Notes."

In conformity with the act of the congress of the United States, entitled
" An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned." And also to the act entitled, " An act supplementary to the act entitled, ' An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, etching, and engraving historical and other prints."

PHILIP MOORE,
Clerk of the District of Maryland.

Preface.

THIS *Chef d'œuvre* of one of the most agreeable writers of the age, will be read with no inconsiderable pleasure. The exalted virtue, generosity, self-denial, and heroism displayed in the sentiments and conduct of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, an animated portrait of the principles and manners of a French court—the knowledge of human nature which the author uniformly displays—the beautiful episodes of the countess de Bregi, and of the dutchess de Beaumont; with a variety of historical traits, are all calculated to interest the reader, and to render this an excellent novel. With all its interesting incidents, its moral, not to say pious tendency, will be approved by all, more especially by those of the Roman Church.



MADemoiselle
DE LA FAYETTE ;

OR,

THE AGE OF LOUIS XIII.

IF the review of a brilliant and celebrated age afford a high degree of pleasure, that which went before it cannot be wholly destitute of interest. Sometimes a frightful decline, suddenly producing the most tremendous political convulsions, likewise leads us now and then to æras of resplendent glory : at others, several reigns are required to pave the way for one which shall deserve the character of memorable.

It is the high polish of courts, and the love of sovereigns for the arts, that call forth distinguished talents, and form the public manners. Without even cherishing any desire or hope of rising, an innate instinct invariably impels us to look above our own sphere : thither we are attracted by the light; there we contemplate either delusive meteors that lead us astray, or beneficent luminaries by which we are enlightened.

The national character of the French owes its distinguishing qualities to the chivalry of Francis I.; to the generosity, the valour, and the gaiety

of Henry the Great ; to the gallantry and dignified pride of Louis XIV. The French character was formed of this happy mixture of heroic virtues and amiable qualities. Something would have been wanting either to these charms or to its greatness, if any one of these monarchs had not existed. Literature and the arts have owed their advancement and their lustre to the protection of those same princes, and to the refined taste which Catharine and Mary de Medicis brought with them from Italy. Anne of Austria, educated at the court of Spain, communicated to that of France the chivalrous spirit of galantry which was introduced by the Moors in the south of Europe, and to which the good taste of Louis XIV. in the sequel imparted a higher dignity and elegance.

Anne of Austria and Louis XIII. were both born in the same month of the same year, in 1601;* they were united at the age of fifteen years. The character of the queen seemed to be already formed ; she was sprightly, witty, and brilliant. Louis, still a child, and naturally bashful and reserved, felt but too sensibly her superiority over him. It is easy to govern persons of weak, indolent, and austere characters, without gaining their affections ; but it is impossible to charm without dazzling them ; their admiration is nothing but a kind of astonishment mingled with fear, which, so far from exciting any enthusiasm in their breasts, fills them only with embarrassment and aversion. The queen might have enslaved Louis, but she had none of the qualities requisite to excite his attachment. Louis admired her beauty, but feared her vivacity : her gaiety, her frankness, her fondness for amusements and festivities, were

* The queen was five days older than Louis XIII.

repugnant to the austerity of his principles; so that from the very commencement of their union, he withdrew himself from her society as much as the rules of decorum would allow.

Mary de Medicis, who then held the reins of government, dreading the influence which a wife so young and beautiful might acquire, neglected no means of strengthening the unfavourable impressions, and confirming the dislike of the king. In this manner were passed the early years of their youth. The queen never complained, neither did she show the least resentment; but before her favourites she would drop indiscreet pleasantries respecting the conduct and character of the king. The reproaches of a forsaken wife, though they may vex, cannot at least wound self-love; but it is impossible to forgive the ridicule of things which ought to excite pity and sorrow, for that must be a mark of contempt and insensibility. Crafty tale-bearers, instigated by the love of mischief, aggravated the aversion of Louis XIII.: it was not in his disposition either studiously to conceal or to give vent to his feelings, and still less to require explanation. He did not lay himself under the restraint of dissembling his resentment, but expressed it by a cold and disdainful silence alone. The queen's pride was hurt by this treatment. Too young to be sensible of her unfortunate and dangerous situation, and cut off from the benefits of salutary advice, she was at no pains to regain the king, and their mutual antipathy became irreconcilable.*

Louis XIII. had piety and integrity; his morals were irreproachable; he possessed sensi-

* All these circumstances are historical. See the *Memoirs of Madame de Motteville*.

bility, a good understanding, a courage worthy of the son of Henry the Great, and even talents for war: he had, however, none of those virtues which ensure domestic felicity; he neglected all his duties as a son, a husband, a brother, ■ friend, and was neither a great prince nor a good king, because in a sovereign indolence and weakness are the most dangerous of all vices, as strength is the most necessary quality in one who undertakes to carry a very heavy burden. Brought up amidst commotions and factions, Louis knew nothing of royalty but its embarrassments and its shackles: in the supreme authority he beheld nothing but the anxieties of superintendence and the fatigue of commanding. He had received a bad education. Having attained an age when reflection and industry might have repaired its defects, he mistook his ignorance for incapacity. Those who were desirous of governing in his name took good care to encourage this idea, which moreover furnished an excuse for his indolence: for he would much rather distrust his abilities than endeavour to overcome his aversion to business. The renown of Henry IV. and the tribute of admiration universally paid to his memory, instead of exciting emulation in his son operated only as a discouragement. The most illustrious models are not always the most useful; they extinguish the ambition to surpass them, which alone is capable of kindling enthusiasm.

There was however some difference between Louis XIII. and other slothful sovereigns: that prince did not resign the fortunes of the empire to chance; his understanding and his principles at least enabled him to select a fit substitute to whom to entrust his authority; he did not carelessly relinquish the reins of the state, but com-

mitted them with discernment into the ablest hands: he then considered himself as released from all the duties of royalty: he abdicated without descending from the throne, and by this disgraceful abdication, which proclaimed only an incapacity to reign, without manifesting a dignified contempt of grandeur, he divested himself of all the majesty of supreme rank, and still continued responsible for all calamities. His subjects reproached him for the mischiefs that ensued, and denied him the smallest portion of the glory of his reign. Posterity has confirmed this severe but equitable sentence.

The indolence of Louis needed a prime minister, and his heart sought a friend. Henry IV. found friends who were faithful, and devotedly attached to him; Louis XIII. had only favourites. A still stronger passion which the purity of his soul caused him to take for friendship seemed for some time to engage him. Among the queen's ladies of honour he paid particular attention to Mademoiselle de Hautefort: her discretion and virtue seduced Louis, for such a character in a young and beautiful female was for him a dangerous snare. Mademoiselle de Hautefort had ambition, a good understanding, and a serious disposition; Louis was pleased with her conversation, and soon felt a certain confidence towards her. To the astonishment of all, he was observed to pay daily visits to the queen, whom he saw but for a moment, and to remain for whole hours in a closet contiguous to the apartment of that princess, where at stated times Mademoiselle de Hautefort and some other ladies of honour were in attendance. There Louis, making Mademoiselle de Hautefort seat herself at a window beside him, conversed with her in a low tone, and forgot him-

self in these interviews, at which the word love was not once pronounced.* The austerity of the king's manners was so well known, that this kind of intimacy did not affect the reputation of Mademoiselle de Hautefort; who indeed, probably with a view to prevent all suspicion, never failed to repeat to her mistress whatever was said to her by the king. Her majesty's associates were highly diverted with this new kind of intrigue; and Mademoiselle de Hautefort herself took delight in turning into ridicule the sentiments and conduct of her august lover:* in this she shewed neither prudence nor honesty: she ought either not to have listened to the secrets of the king, or not to have betrayed them.

In the space of a few months the king detected this species of perfidy; he received positive proofs of it, for several circumstances were repeated to him which he had never mentioned except to Mademoiselle de Hautefort. He was equally exasperated both as a sovereign and a friend: he made no complaints, but Mademoiselle de Hautefort lost her place, and was exiled from the court.* Louis again secluded himself in his own apartments, and became more gloomy and reserved than ever. About the same time he was involved in severe vexations, occasioned by the animosity of the queen-mother against cardinal Richelieu. With warm passions, a shallow understanding, and boundless ambition, Mary de Medicis united absolute incapacity: she was equally weak and imperious. There was as much hastiness and levity in her disposition, as obstinacy in her passions: she suffered herself to be controuled by her affections, her favourites

* Historical.

governed her, and she aspired to reign over France with despotic sway. Her ill temper and violence had early lost her the heart of her husband; her domineering character estranged from her a son naturally dutiful and affectionate; and this unreasonable ambition compelled the minister, who to her owed his elevation, to become her enemy. Richelieu, neglecting no means of appeasing her resentment, had recourse to supplications, to submissions: he shed tears at her feet: the queen remained inflexible.* Louis, frightened, or rather weary of their quarrels, behaved neither like a son nor a master; he might have put an end to this domestic dissention by enjoining the queen, with all possible filial respect, and with the whole weight of the royal authority, to interfere no more in the affairs of the state. In vain he entreated: he durst not command and he sacrificed his mother:* he had not the courage to speak for a moment with firmness, but enough to venture upon an odious rupture. Thus weakness, under a great variety of circumstances, adopts more violent resolutions than the most impetuous passions, which at least, after venting themselves, generally subside. Louis was well aware that the order which he was about to issue would enrage the queen to the highest degree; but her exile would relieve him from the embarrassment of facing scenes so truly disagreeable: he knew that the public voice would be raised against him; but he knew likewise that it would not reach his ear; in short, he resembled those who believed in the appearance of spirits: he was afraid of nothing but of *seeing and hearing*. Such is the absurdity of weak minds.

* Historical.

The king went to hide himself at one of his country seats, while a letter was sent in his name to Mary de Medicis, announcing her exile, and allowing her the choice of Compeigne, or of the castles of Angers, Nevers, and Moulins, for her residence. The disgrace of sovereigns of bad character is the more keenly felt, as it is almost always unexpected: weakness, which fears explanations above all things, shuns and prevents them by dissembling, especially when it suffers itself to be persuaded to take some decisive step. Mary de Medicis was thunder-struck!— Anne of Austria, when informed of the circumstance, beheld only an unhappy mother in the person of the princess by whom she had been persecuted; she flew to her apartment, threw herself into her arms, wept with her, and promised to exert all her influence, small as it was, in her behalf. She kept her word; but though her general conduct was irreproachable, she could not exert the powerful rights of an indulgent and tender wife: (1) her generosity appeared to Louis XIII. a mere pretext maliciously laid hold of to censure his conduct, and he drily commanded her to be silent. A few days afterwards, the queen-mother, who had chosen Compeigne for her retirement, left it clandestinely, and went abroad. The courtiers assured cardinal Richelieu, and the ministers repeated it to the king, that Mary de Medicis being an object of public hatred, excited no interest whatever, and that the whole nation approved a severity which the unbounded ambition of that princess rendered absolutely necessary for the tranquility of the state. Louis had too much sense to be thoroughly convinced of the truth of this statement; but flattery, even when it fails to persuade, at least creates in the mind a kind of doubt which is always agreeable.

The queen-mother, in reality, had not hitherto enjoyed either the good will or the esteem of the people. They could not forgive the widow of Henry the Great for not having appeared inconsolable at the most horrible and painful catastrophe recorded in the annals of the country ; and all the hatred excited by her favourites had been transferred to herself. Her misfortune suddenly turned the public opinion in her favour : every person felt for the fate of an exile mother and a fugitive queen : the sympathy excited by illustrious persons who suffer persecution is the more general, as it always furnishes occasion for censuring the persecutors. The people spared neither the king nor cardinal Richelieu, whom they accused of the blackest ingratitude. They forgot that to Richelieu Mary de Medicis had formerly owed her reconciliation with Louis : * the queen-mother, it is true, had afterwards rendered him the most important services, but in all that she did for him she designed only to conclude a bargain, not to pay the debt with favours : she was desirous of governing in his name ; and one of the greatest statesmen that ever existed was taxed with ingratitude, because he refused to resign all the power with which he was entrusted into the hands of a capricious, hot-headed woman, without talents and without capacity.

While the king, more gloomy and reserved than ever, indulged his melancholy in the privacy of his apartment, the young queen daily assembled around her all those persons belonging to the court who were most distinguished for their abilities and accomplishments.

Gaston, duke of Orleans, the king's brother,

* Historical.

a friend without courage or constancy, a prince without character, but easy, agreeable, and engaging in company;—the count de Soissons, as remarkable for his valour, his beauty, and his accomplishments, as he was interesting for the qualities of his heart;—Varicarville and Saint-Ibal, friends of that prince;—the count de la Meillerage, the marquis de Sourvé, the duke de Bellegarde, the commander de Jars, who added to the celebrity resulting from extraordinary achievements, the rare merit of having displayed the most exalted character;—Chavigny, so cunning and so insinuating as to find means to please the queen, though he was devoted to the interest of cardinal Richelieu;—the young Cabot, whom ambition and love had even then attached to Mademoiselle de Rohan;—The princess Mary, daughter of the duke of Mantua, and who was afterwards queen of Poland;—Mademoiselle de Guise, whose beauty, dignity and virtue were equally admired;—Mademoiselle de Vendôme;—the marchioness de Beaumont, whose original way of thinking amused the queen;—the artful and beautiful dutchess de Montbazon;—the dutchess de Chevreuse, who disguising a profound ambition and passionate love of intrigue under the appearances of giddiness and levity, enjoyed the exclusive privilege of saying any thing without danger, and doing any thing without injury to her reputation; unaffected, indiscreet in matters of little consequence, her manners and her conversation replete with charms, banished all mistrust, but she was capable of keeping the most important secrets: in her pliancy was a particular art, for it never led her either into treachery or meanness, she had in the sequel intimate connexions in all parties, yet she retained them all, and made them subservient to her de-

signs, although she never betrayed a secret or a friend : it was by this address that she contrived to acquire such an extraordinary ascendancy over cardinal Richelieu, and at the same time to win the entire confidence of Anne of Austria, whose favourite she became :* such were the persons who composed the circles of the queen. (2)

Some days after the escape of Mary de Medicis, the princess Mary of Mantua asked the queen to give to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, to whose family she was attached, the yet vacant place of Mademoiselle de Hautefort. The queen, who no longer flattered herself that she should be able to procure the re-instatement of the latter, promised to apply in behalf of her friend to the king, who immediately gave his consent, pleased to find from this circumstance that the queen had relinquished all hopes of Mademoiselle de Hautefort's recall. The princess Mary hastened to convey the intelligence to the countess of Brégy, aunt of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, to whom she supplied the place of mother.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was of an illustrious family, being the last descendant of the male issue of the famous marshal de la Fayette, who in 1421 gained such glory at the battle of Baugé in Anjou, and who afterwards contributed by his valour and activity to the expulsion of the English from the kingdom.* Mademoiselle de la Fayette, an orphan from her cradle, was brought up by her aunt, the countess of Brégy, who took her home from the convent at the age of fifteen years, and accustoming her by degrees to do the honours of her house, introduced her into the very best company. The countess was a widow, rich, and very

* Historical.

old ; she had no children, and doted on her niece, who was her only heir. Mademoiselle de la Fayette combined with the most fascinating beauty every mental accomplishment and an unspotted reputation : she was now twenty-three years of age, and every body was astonished that she had not yet made choice of one from among the many suitors who solicited her hand. The countess de Brégi had herself experienced the misery resulting from an unhappy marriage contracted when very young : she therefore allowed her niece to follow her own inclination, and instead of hurrying her to come to a decision, was continually exhorting her not to take any step without the most mature reflection.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was imbued with all the principles that a christian education and the most sincere and well-grounded religious sentiments are capable of imparting. She possessed a sound and cultivated understanding ; a lively imagination ; an elevated, generous, and exquisitely sensible soul. Her ever equal, engaging and innocent gaiety ; her modesty ; the serenity of her look and demeanor, took from the perfection of her character every appearance of austerity. Her perfect purity was recognized in the tranquility and peace which result from it, and which were conspicuous in her whole person. It was obvious that no passion had ever disturbed her soul ; that always at peace with herself, she was as yet a stranger to internal conflicts, and that she had never experienced the agitations of pride and vanity. Every one soon felt perfectly at ease in her company : her conversation had a peculiar charm, because it was marked with that grace and pertinency which interest, and with that sweetness, and that absence of all affectation

which fascinate and sooth. She possessed the gift, so inestimable in a woman, of pleasing without noise or shew : when she had enchanted all who had conversed with her, envy herself was not ruffled, and no one thought that she had shone. She found no difficulty in excusing the faults of others, with which she was never more than half acquainted : a glance was sufficient to warn her not to think of them ; just as we turn our eyes from a disagreeable object. There are qualities which we perceive at the first interview, and others which it requires penetration and a long intercourse to discover. Every one is struck with the brilliancy of a fine day ; but it is only after some time that the genial influence of a healthy climate and pure atmosphere can be appreciated. Thus too it was with the admirable qualities which constituted the character of Mademoiselle de la Fayette : no shadow, no contrast caused one to appear more striking than another : it was impossible not to think Mademoiselle de la Fayette charming and accomplished, but it required time and a great deal of penetration to discover the full extent of her superiority. Nevertheless this female, though so perfect, had, on the very score of her character, more than one rock to dread, as she might more easily than another rashly venture into a wrong track. She prized happiness at too high a rate : she was not aware that whatever is most simple is likewise most solid ; that whatever is least subject to crosses is the best ; and that exaggerated and romantic ideas on this subject have produced more errors, mistakes, and misfortunes, than the most vehement and dangerous passions. Mademoiselle de la Fayette had long come to the determination to bestow her hand on that man only who was superior to all others in elevation of cha-

racter, or to one whom she should think capable of becoming so. Having no ambition on her own account, she felt that she should give unbounded latitude to that passion on behalf of the man to whom she should give her whole affection : accordingly she required in a husband fortitude, energy, greatness of soul, in short all the qualities that constitute a hero. This idea had taken such hold of her imagination, that she thought of nothing but the advice which she should once give to the *great man* to whom she was to be united. How fondly she promised herself to exalt his love of glory ! How she delighted in representing him as raising himself by his reputation above all his contemporaries. Dangerous reveries, which had but too powerful an influence on her destiny, and rendered her insensible to all the homage that she received ! By a singular fatality, the countess of Brégi could not help cherishing these chimerical notions of her niece. Extraordinary circumstances and great misfortunes had inflamed her imagination, and would not allow her to moderate the ardour of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. She perceived in her so much discretion in all the ordinary concerns of life, and so pure a soul, that she never took alarm at her vivacity on one single point, especially as on this head the countess herself entertained ideas still more extravagant. She fancied that she had done enough for reason and morality, by repeating to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, that love is by no means necessary in marriage ; but that as a woman gives herself a master when she marries, she ought to fix upon a man whom she can revere and admire, and that her happiness is proportionate to the degree of admiration which she feels for him. It is true, that to an elevated soul this pro-

found admiration would be a thousand times preferable to love : but as a woman ought not to flatter herself that she shall meet with an object who deserves it, and who comes up to her wishes, it should likewise be observed, that in this union for life we ought to seek above all things such sentiments, as being independent of the imagination, are likely to last for ever ; esteem, sympathy of tastes, of minds, and of characters. These truths are trivial ; they present nothing striking ; they nevertheless contain more sound sense than all the vain systems produced by enthusiasm : happy are those young females who are capable of appreciating them !

The age and health of Madame de Brégy gave her sufficient warning of her approaching dissolution : she had been ill so long, that all about her, habituated to the sight of her sufferings, though they felt sincerely for her, were under no apprehensions. She alone was aware of the extreme danger of her condition, but never dropped a syllable on the subject. It was this secret conviction that excited in her a desire to obtain a place at court for her niece, in order that she might leave her a provision and a powerful protectress. The attachment of Mademoiselle de la Fayette to her aunt caused her at first to give a decided negative to this proposal : the countess was obliged to exert all her authority to gain her consent, and to invent family reasons in justification of the importance which she attached to the place in question. Mademoiselle de la Fayette complied, but with extreme reluctance : exclusively of the painful necessity of parting from her aunt, she had formed no very pleasing ideas of the court. She had frequently heard high praise bestowed on the queen, but all that she had learned respecting

the king only served to produce the strongest dislike of that prince and of a court governed by so weak a sovereign, who confining himself to the controul over the interior of his palace, weakly relinquished the actual power to a vindictive, imperious, and despotic minister. If Louis XIII. had not displayed the most signal courage in war, Mademoiselle de la Fayette would have felt the highest contempt for him ; but while she esteemed his valour, she censured his indolence, his cruelty (for she supposed that he had a bad heart,) his conduct towards the queen and to his mother ; finally, she was persuaded that he was totally destitute of intelligence, and cordially hated his character and person. How humiliating it is, she would observe to her aunt, to live under the sway of a sluggish monarch, who sees only with the eyes of his servants, who decides only with the judgment of others. It is not he who rewards ; still less can he bestow encouragement ; he has no voice, his opinion is not asked, neither is any deference shewn to him : during the whole course of his reign obedience is paid only to the ministers and favourites whom caprice has recommended to his choice. I must confess, continued she, that I should wish to be excused this disagreeable presentation, for I am sure I shall feel the greatest pain when I see the king : but I shall not often have to undergo this trial, since he is more rarely seen at court than any other person belonging to it.

Such were the opinions and ideas of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, when she made her appearance at court. Madame de Brégy, who was too ill to go on the day of her presentation to Paris, where the court then resided, remained at her country-seat at Vincennes, about a mile and

a half from the Faubourg Saint Antoine. It was agreed that Mademoiselle de la Fayette should return in the evening, and spend a few days longer with her aunt before she went to reside at court, when Madame de Brégi hoped to be able to accompany her to Paris. It was the beginning of March. Mademoiselle de la Fayette repaired to court with the princess Mary: she learned with pleasure that the king would not appear that day in public, and consequently that she should be exempted from the dreaded ceremony of presentation. The whole court admired the beauty of Mademoiselle de la Fayette and the charms which adorned her whole person: the queen received her with the most gracious condescension. On leaving the queen she was going to pay some customary visits in the palace, but in the galleries met a messenger who had come to seek her with the intelligence that the countess de Brégi was dying, and desired to see her. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, overwhelmed with grief, immediately quitted the palace in equal haste and agitation. She threw herself into a carriage, and without losing time by going to a house which she occupied in Paris for the purpose of changing her splendid attire, she hurried to Vincennes. On her arrival, having alighted from the carriage, the first object that met her eye was the venerable Vincent de Paul, that hero of religion and humanity, that confidant of all the charitable and pious who were then so numerous. Having been summoned by the expiring countess, whose friend he was, he went to the foot of the stairs to meet Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and fully prepared her for the painful spectacle which she was about to witness. "Ah, father!" exclaimed she, the tears trickling down her cheeks; "is there then no hope?"—"Her

last moment is at hand."—"Gracious heaven! And is she apprised of her condition?"—"She insisted upon knowing, and that with precision. The virtuous Morin,* on being closely questioned by her, assured her two hours ago that she could not live over the day." "Good God!" "To her this declaration was not a fearful sentence; no emotion was visible in her countenance: she affectionately thanked the communicator of this important intelligence, and taking a valuable diamond ring from her finger, requested him to accept it as a pledge of her esteem and gratitude. (3.) She had already performed all the duties enjoined by religion; she has since looked over and signed some papers and given various orders, with equal composure and presence of mind: but come Mademoiselle, and receive her blessing; come and admire the fortitude and resignation which religion is capable of imparting." At these words, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, scarcely able to support herself, leaned sobbing on the arm of the worthy father, and proceeded with him to the lady's chamber. On entering the room she ran and fell on her knees beside the bed of her aunt, who with an affectionate look, but with sweet serenity, bestowed on her the tenderest benedictions. Vincent de Paul then addressed the countess in these words:—"To you, madam, all terrestrial pomp is now as nothing; you are now acquainted with the illusions of the world and the falsehood of its maxims; you are now left alone with memory and truth!—No human power can henceforth lend you aid or afford you support!—Those honours and those attentions which your

* A celebrated physician of that time, and a man of eminent piety. See the Eulogy on him by Fontenelle.

fortune and rank commanded no longer exist for you!—But you have yet left a retinue, at this moment a thousand times as gratifying as that of the greatest monarchs of the earth, a retinue which will follow you to your last home, composed of the poor whom you have relieved and of the orphans whom you have brought up!—The interest and the good wishes of your relatives and friends can no longer avail you: but the feeble prayers of infancy, about to be preferred in your behalf, will rise to the throne of the Almighty!—Come, children, continued he, “come and pray for your benefactress.” At these words a door opened, twelve young children advanced, and falling on their knees around the bed, with tears, unanimously ejaculated:—“*O God! have mercy on our mother. O God! reward the charity of our kind mother.*” At these pious invocations of gratitude, at these tears and sobs, the features of the countess suddenly brightened: never did more soothing harmony meet the ear of a dying person. With increased fervour she pressed to her heart a crucifix which she held in her embrace, for she prayed with redoubled confidence. A ray of celestial joy dispelled the shades of death from her brow, and raising her eyes towards heaven, she breathed her last with a sublime hope. Mademoiselle de la Fayette was forcibly conducted to her apartment, and there accidentally perceiving her figure in a glass, she shuddered on observing the brilliant dress, which was now to be succeeded by one of so melancholy a kind. As a sort of expiation, she vowed to wear mourning for her aunt two years, without any ornaments, in all the austere simplicity of the deepest mourning.

The countess de Brégy, by her will, left several pious legacies, and bequeathed the residue of her property to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, to whom

she recommended her poor pensioners and the unfortunate children entrusted to the care of the venerable Vincent de Paul : for these her niece undertook in future to provide. The countess likewise forbade every kind of parade at her funeral, on which point, as on every other, she was strictly obeyed ; but her remains were followed to the grave by a retinue that eclipses the most pompous funeral processions, by sincerely sorrowing friends, and a great number of disconsolate poor and orphans.

The queen at the request of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, granted her leave of absence for two months. This interval she spent at home with the friends of her aunt, and especially with Vincent de Paul : she never went abroad except to church, or to the meetings of the Ladies of Charity, at which Vincent, who was then zealously engaged in the establishment of a hospital for foundlings, presided. These children were still distributed in private houses : no steps had yet been taken to collect them in one institution, but only to defray the expences of their maintenance, which amounted to upwards of forty thousand francs. The ladies had already contributed for them, and had besides given considerable sums towards the re-establishment of the Hotel Dieu. Vincent de Paul had it in contemplation to persuade them to fresh sacrifices* : he assembled all the ladies in a church, and delivered a discourse, in which he plead the cause of those unfortunate infants. His pulpit was surrounded by a throng of nurses holding his poor orphans in their arms. These children all at once began to cry. The preacher stopped short, and after a moment's si-

* Historical.

lence thus resumed :—" Do you hear," said he, " the cries of these innocent little creatures ? It is you, ladies, whom they are imploring : you will not turn a deaf ear to these cries of nature which claim your maternal pity ; you who have been mothers to these infants, you will not abandon them !" ... The whole auditory dissolved into tears ; and all the ladies, among whom was Mademoiselle de la Fayette, contributed and supplied the requisite sum.* Many of the courtiers likewise promoted this good work ; one of them even devoted his whole property to the purpose. The commander de Brulard-Sillery, who had been ambassador in Spain and Italy, and possessed a large fortune, opened his will in order to make himself the executor of it ; he discharged his servants, on whom he settled pensions, and gave up his hotel. His patrimonial estate he preserved untouched for the natural heirs ; but he sold all his furniture, plate, and jewels ; and under the direction of Vincent de Paul, he distributed among the poor the whole produce of this pious sale. Reserving for himself a small annuity just sufficient for his support, he transferred all the rest of his income to the hospitals founded, begun, or re-established by Vincent.† Several persons of this family have given examples of this admirable charity : the Soissonnois, during the last century, was full of their pious foundations.‡ In this house, now extinct, and which furnished the country with some eminent statesmen, humanity, benevolence, and courage, were hereditary virtues.

* Historical.

† Historical. See the *Life of Saint Vincent*, by Louis Abelli, Bishop of Rhodés, in 4to.

‡ Some traces of them still remain.

When Mademoiselle de la Fayette was capable of attending to business, she examined her aunt's papers ; among which she found a manuscript in the hand writing of the diseased. This precious relique Mademoiselle de la Fayette opened with equal emotion and curiosity, and read as follows :

HISTORY

OF THE

COUNTESS DE BREGI.

Written by herself.

The first years of my youth passed amidst the storms and commotions occasioned by civil wars. Having had the misfortune to lose my parents in my infancy, I found a second mother in my eldest sister Madeleine de Sénectère, widow of Guy Exuperi de Mimaumont, who was twelve years older than myself. She was not less distinguished for virtue and beauty than she rendered herself celebrated for heroic courage. She possessed a large fortune, and resided on her estate situated at Auvergne. After she became a widow, all the gentlemen of Auvergne and Burgundy aspired to her hand ; but she declared that she would not marry any other than the man who should contribute most by his courage to clear her estates and the whole province of the leaguers : adding that she was determined to be herself the judge of their exploits, as she should put herself at their head.* This extraordinary

* Historical.

resolution was not without a parallel; in those days enthusiasm was the spring of every action, however noble, or however criminal. At this period the dutchess de Retz collected soldiers to defend her possessions, declared herself their commander, and displayed such resolution that the leaguers durst not attempt any enterprize against her.* In the same century a woman named Constance du Barry, valiantly defended Leucate, and preserved that place for Henry the Great. (4)

Sixty gentlemen formed themselves into a body to serve under the command of my sister, in hopes that after the war she would marry one of them. They took a solemn oath, by which they bound themselves to strive to surpass one another only in generosity, to make no opposition to my sister's choice, and to remain closely united. Having all the same sentiments and the same object, they adopted the same device, which was an armed warrior, with these words: "*For our God, our King, and our Lady.*"

Among these rival friends was one, who on account of his youth, could not reasonably aspire to be the husband of my sister. This was young Brégi; he was only twenty years of age, and at this period I was fourteen. Brégi solicited my hand, and it was promised him: he was amiable, and I soon conceived a sincere attachment for him. All the attentions, all the praises, all the festivities of the party were addressed exclusively to my sister; she was the object of universal enthusiasm. Among all these warriors Brégi was the only one who took any notice of me: I mistook gratitude and vanity for love; an error into

* Historical.

which the female heart, even with more experience than I possessed, is very liable to fall. Under the conviction that I had conceived a strong passion for Brégi, I bound myself irrevocably by solemn engagements, promising him that whatever might be the issue of the war, I would never be the wife of any other man. Nevertheless, I deeply regretted within my own breast that he had not yet distinguished himself by some brilliant exploit; but I consoled my mind with the consideration of his youth, and felt confident that in time he would acquire a brilliant reputation. I heard nothing talked of but war and heroic actions: my imagination was so inflamed, that I was desirous of attending my sister to battle. On receiving her positive refusal, I placed all my love of glory in the achievements of Brégi; I was jealous of all the exploits of the others: how could I do otherwise than believe that I was passionately in love with him? I would have sacrificed every drop of my blood for the satisfaction of seeing him surpass all his companions in arms.

It was about this time that the brave Montluc, who defended Sienna for the French, and whom the inhabitants honoured with the title of dictator, after sustaining a siege of ten months, and being reduced to the utmost extremities by famine, accepted in behalf of the Siennese a capitulation which he refused for himself and his Frenchmen. *Never, said he, shall the name of Montluc be seen subscribed to a capitulation.** He declared as is well known, that if the enemy would not suffer him to retire with his men without any writings or conditions, he would cut

* Historical.

his way through them, certain of perishing, but at least with glory. The enemy not only allowed him to pass, but received him with marks of the highest esteem; in fact, the appearance of his band of pale, emaciated, and dying soldiers, proudly traversing the hostile camp, filled every heart with respect and admiration.* My soul was fired by the recital of this action. Soon afterwards, Montluc, passing through Auvergne, stopped two days at our mansion. I beheld him with extraordinary emotion; and though I could not discover in him more intelligence or more pleasing qualities than in any other person, I yet felt that if he had loved me, and I had not been pre-engaged, I should have preferred him to every man that I knew. After the departure of this valiant officer, I long cherished the recollection of him, and could not dismiss him from my imagination till I had obtained a promise from Brégi that that if ever he should have a place to defend he would in like manner say: *Never shall the name of Brégi be seen subscribed to a capitulation.* Accustomed to hear of nothing but war and politics, I had neither the timidity natural to my sex, nor that of my age: but I had a memory sufficiently strong, and sense enough to repeat with intelligence all the best things that were said on those grave subjects. I was admired; my premature understanding was highly praised; but I had less perhaps than many other young females of fifteen, since these discussions inflamed my imagination, since they moreover prevented me from reflecting on the real duties of woman,

* Historical. The general of the enemy was the marquis de Maragnan. He went to meet Montluc, embraced him, and bestowed on him all the praises due to his courage.

and at the same time had a tendency to encourage presumption and temerity. I have since often thought, that had not religious principles been carefully instilled into me, this dangerous education would infallibly have poisoned my mind and corrupted my heart; but religion corrects and makes amends for all defects.

Meanwhile frequent engagements took place with the leaguers, and for some time their issue had been considerably in our favour. The rebels had a new leader, who, notwithstanding his youth, displayed not less genius for war than valour and activity. The most surprising actions were related concerning him: he was of noble birth, no more than twenty-four years of age, and his name was Roquelaure. Notwithstanding my passion for warlike achievements, I felt no admiration for those of Roquelaure, because he was engaged in the service of a party who had forsaken their God and rebelled against their king.

In one of these conflicts, in which the enemy, who were superior in number, put our vassals to the rout, in spite of the intrepidity of my sister, and the valiant troop of lovers who constantly surrounded her, she rashly rushed into the midst of the enemy. In this movement her horse fell: in order to support herself she rested the point of her sword upon the ground, but the blade snapped in the middle. The soldiers laid hold of her with the intention of making her a prisoner, when Roquelaure came up, assisted to replace her on her horse, which was not hurt, and said: "You are at liberty, madam, we are not at war with ladies." My sister rejoined her little band, whose apprehensions subsided: they rallied round her; the battle was renewed, and continued till night without any decisive advantage on either side.

From this day I remarked a great alteration in my sister's humour; she became absent, thoughtful and grave, she talked to me of nothing but Roquelaure, and her strong desire to gain over that young chieftain to the good cause. "What a conquest that would be!" said she; "heaven has perhaps reserved this glory for me. At least I ought to make the attempt; if it succeeds, how serviceable it would prove to the good cause." As a preliminary step, she sent to Roquelaure requesting a truce for three weeks; he complied; but all the young warriors belonging to our party disapproved this proceeding adopted without their consent; and contrary to my sister's expectation, no parleys took place. Unable to keep her secret any longer, my sister at length acknowledged that she had conceived an unconquerable and hopeless passion; in a word, that she had been deeply in love with Roquelaure ever since the day on which the young warrior had so generously set her at liberty. This imprudent confidence served only to strengthen an unfortunate attachment; for from that moment my sister talked to me of nothing but Roquelaure, and excited in me the most anxious desire so become acquainted with, or at least to see him.

I availed myself of the truce to go to spend five or six days at a gentleman's seat at about twenty miles from our's: my sister did not accompany me, but consigned me to the care of a governess. I set out at day-break and arrived early. The owners of the mansion not having been apprized of my coming, were from home, but I was assured that they would certainly return in the course of the day.

It was now the month of September: the weather was warm and cloudy. I proposed to my

governess to take a walk round the house. We had not rambled far, when, in a field skirted by a wood, I saw a very deep ditch, the sides of which, forming a very gentle declivity, were covered with turf. At the bottom grew a prodigious quantity of very beautiful flowers, some of which I wished to gather. We got down without any difficulty: I gathered what flowers I chose, and clambered up again to return to the house. Just at the moment, when my head and arms were above the bank, a gun went off, and the ball wounded me in the left arm. Overpowered with horror, for I conceived that some one had designed to kill me, I sunk senseless on the brink of the ditch.

On recovering my senses I found myself in the house, lying upon a bed, and surrounded by several persons, who had rendered me all the assistance in their power: my arm was not broken; but the wound was severe. When I opened my eyes, one single object met my view, and rivetted my whole attention: this was a young man of a most prepossessing countenance, pale, and bathed in tears: he was kneeling at the head of my bed. He accosted me in the most affecting language that grief can suggest: I listened to and gazed at him with inexpressible emotion, and notwithstanding the disorder and incoherence of his address, I at length collected, that being abroad shooting while I was gathering the flowers, he had just taken aim at a covey of partridges, at the very moment when I was coming up out of the ditch.—This account deeply moved me: but what was my surprise to learn that this young man, so interesting and so tender, was no other than Roquelaure!—That name made me shudder; he perceived it.

“Yes,” replied he, “it is the name of an enemy,

but of an enemy on whom you are revenged if you hate him. Oh!" continued he, "what words can describe the horror of the moment when I beheld your angelic figure rise all at once amidst a bush of flowers, and as suddenly drop from the effect of the mischievous ball discharged by my unfortunate hand!—I flew to you, with the determination not to survive if you had been dead; I furiously pushed aside the woman who attended you; I took you in my arms, and brought you hither!—In short, Heaven be praised, your wound, which I dressed myself, is not dangerous, and will not be attended with any bad consequences; but I wish I could spare you the pain which it occasions."

This impassioned language astonished and profoundly affected me. I expressed my thanks in reply; and Roquelaure, apprehensive lest it might do me harm to prolong this conversation, entreated me to go to bed, and left me, saying that he would remain in my antichamber till the arrival of my sister, to whom he had dispatched a messenger. The idea of being present at an interview between my sister and Roquelaure gave me extreme anxiety, and a thousand vague inquietudes. I knew that Brégi was absent, and the certainty that he would not come along with her produced a secret satisfaction, for which I did not endeavour to account.

As I had no fever I would not go to bed: seating myself, therefore, in an arm-chair, I listened attentively to what was passing in the adjoining room. Roquelaure was there, and from time to time I heard his voice. A surgeon, for whom he had sent to the little town of Aurillac, arrived in the evening. He removed the first dressing applied to my wound, and assured me that in ten or

twelve days it would be perfectly healed. During this second dressing the pain was so severe as to make me cry out. Roquelaure in the utmost alarm hurried into my chamber, and I endeavoured as well as I could to pacify his apprehensions. He trembled to such a degree that he was obliged to support himself against the back of my chair. At this moment the door opened, and my sister ran towards me with extended arms. But the moment she saw Roquelaure she suddenly stopped ; her arms, which were stretched out to me, sunk ; surprise, curiosity, and displeasure, were depicted in her countenance, and she was fixed motionless to the spot. She knew not as yet any of the circumstances of my accident, except that I had received a gun-shot wound in the arm. Not a word had been said to her respecting Roquelaure. She looked stedfastly at him ; his sorrowful air, his eyes swimming in tears, betrayed but too visibly what was passing in his soul—The surgeon, and the women who were in my chamber, having retired, I fell about my sister's neck ; but she received me with coldness, which I had never before experienced. Roquelaure briefly related how the affair had happened, and then, without giving her time to reply, thus proceeded :—" You know not, madam, the full extent of my misfortune !—This day of horror and anxiety has for ever decided my fate ; an acknowledgement which I determined not to make except in your presence. I adore your charming sister—" " Hold," cried my sister in the most imperious tone : " stop ; this language from a Calvinist and a rebel is an insult ; besides, my sister is already engaged ; she has solemnly promised her hand. Brégi is her lover ; and she is passionately attached to him." In this

word *passionately*, there seemed to me to be a very offensive exaggeration ; but I durst not contradict her. Roquelaure, thunder-struck at this intelligence, raised his eyes towards heaven, and after a moment's silence rejoined ; " I am truly unfortunate ; but what of that ? I vow, nevertheless to devote to her my thoughts and my life : I shall never see her more ; but she will hear of me."— At these words my sister shrugged her shoulders with the most contemptuous expression. This action vexed me to such a degree as to dispel all the fear which her presence had excited. Roquelaure came up to me ; " Farewell," said he, " be happy ; but deign at least to tell me that I have your pity !"—" Yes, Roquelaure," I replied, " rely upon my friendship, and the gratitude that I shall ever feel towards the generous deliverer of my sister. May heaven enlighten you, and restore you to the true religion and to your king !"—" Be assured," he answered, " that notwithstanding the weakness and insolence of his effeminate minions, if Henry III. had a son, I would never have forsaken his banners ; but he has long ceased to reign, and we have no heir to the throne ; he has renounced glory and the tented field. I have quitted his degraded court, but should never have deserted from his camp. Nevertheless, if you desire it, I will return to my allegiance to him, as soon as I can do so without betraying the interests of my party, though I am ready to sacrifice my own to obey you in this particular. As to religion, I promise to procure instruction. On this point I cannot yield, except to conviction alone ; I will anxiously and sincerely seek the truth, and if I find it conformable to your faith, it will be doubly dear to me."

This address excited in me an emotion which

I took no pains to conceal. "Farewell, Roquelaure," said I, "my good wishes shall go along with you, and every day of my life I will pray to heaven in your behalf." So saying, I held out my hand to him; he grasped it, and dropping upon one knee, he kissed it, bedewed it with tears, and without uttering another word, abruptly rose, darted to the door, and disappeared. I sunk into a chair, and burst into tears. My sister then gave vent to her feelings. Spite, jealousy, and the vehemence of passion, entirely deprived her of the use of reason. Humbled, disappointed, exasperated, her grief was equalled only by her rage and her resentment. She accused me of imprudence and fickleness: with the keenest irony she ridiculed my childish credulity, my tender commiseration for a passion, of which, as she declared, Roquelaure would think just as much as of his promises when he should have rejoined his troops. She added she was quite delighted that she had witnessed so ludicrous a scene, which had completely cured her of all the esteem she had conceived for this enemy of the good cause. Here, for the first time, I interrupted her. What said I, "do you not esteem Roquelaure?"—"I think him perfectly despicable."—"He, despicable?"—"Yes, he! In my opinion there can be nothing more despicable than that levity with which he promised to betray his party, and to renounce his religion."—"He said expressly that he would not betray his party, and he has not promised to betray his religion; he has only given his word that he would seek instruction."—"Do you presume to defend a man who is a traitor to his king?"—"He is only misled: he is but twenty-four years of age."—"A heretic into the bargain?"—"I have a presen-

timent of his conversion : magnanimity paves the way to it." "Is it possible to be at fifteen so audacious, so ungrateful, and so vain ? for vanity alone can have instigated you to espouse the cause of this man, whom you so absurdly suppose to have conceived an ardent passion for you ; and this idea makes you forget your lover, your king, your God !—Such, then, is the return you make for the education I have given you, and all that I have done for you !" —Her sobs now choked her utterance—I rose, went up to her, and would have taken her by the hand, but she rudely repelled me : I began to feel unwell, and threw myself upon my bed. After a silence of a quarter of an hour, my sister reflecting on the wound which I had received, and the powerful emotions which I had experienced, considered that such a scene might be attended with fatal consequences : she seated herself by my pillow, and spoke to me in terms of soothing fondness. We embraced one another, mutually promising never to mention Roquelaure again.

The owners of the mansion arrived in the evening ; my sister again had the mortification to hear Roquelaure spoken of in my presence, and that with the highest encomiums. M. D***, the master of the house, a venerable old man, had formerly rendered an important service to the father of Roquelaure, and the latter, out of gratitude for this kindness, had declared himself the protector of his little estate and of his tenants, whose property, through his interference, was spared by the rebels. A thousand anecdotes were told of his generosity, which were indelibly imprinted on my memory. M. D*** had several times invited him to hunt and shoot on his estate ; but he had never availed himself of this

permission till that very day. This conversation lasted the whole evening, notwithstanding all the endeavours of my sister to break it off, or to change the subject.

A violent attack of fever prevented my departure the following day : my sister was uneasy, and bestowed on me the most affectionate attentions. In three days I was so well that I was able to set out, and to take leave of our hosts.

On entering our mansion we met Brégi, who had just arrived. I felt a painful embarrassment at seeing him again ; I still imagined that I loved him in preference to every other : my conscience had nothing to reproach me with, but my heart, more delicate and more enlightened, secretly warned me that I had reason to fear the penetration of Brégi—My sister gave him an account of my extraordinary adventure, carefully suppressing the sentiments which Roquelaure had manifested towards me, and Brégi never entertained the slightest suspicion of the matter.

The very day after our return, my sister positively declared that I should be united to Brégi before the expiration of the truce ; though she had always told me that he should not receive my hand till I had completed my seventeenth year, and I was not yet sixteen !

Every one was surprised at her precipitation, and Brégi took advantage of this disposition to entreat me not to oppose a measure which would crown all his wishes. A month earlier I should certainly have insisted that, according to the first stipulation, he should wait till the conclusion of the war ; but at this moment it seemed as if the least resistance on my part would be an imprudence, and the disclosure of a secret. I no longer possessed that frankness which springs from a

heart that is free, and that has nothing to dissemble : I grew timorous and fearful ; I agreed to the proposal, but the chaplain who was to have performed the ceremony was taken ill, and it was in consequence postponed.

Meanwhile my sister, swayed by a passion not less violent than unfortunate, astonished all about her by eccentricities in her behaviour, fits of ill-humour, and gusts of passion, which had never before been observed in her. I no longer saw her alone ; she avoided with extreme caution every interview of this kind ; she manifested an extraordinary animosity against the insurgents, of whom she never spoke but in terms of contempt and indignation, declaring that she burnt with impatience for the expiration of the armistice, that she might recommence operations, and complete the extermination of those odious heretics. Such were her expressions.

At length the war was renewed : the day before the first engagement my sister insisted that though the chaplain was yet ill, and unable to go to the church, that I should be betrothed in his chamber, and that the contract should be executed. After this ceremony my sister delivered a sword to Brégi, saying :—" May you with this weapon pierce the heart of the insolent leader of the rebels !"—These words made me shudder—the chamber was filled with the gentlemen who served under my sister—Brégi took the sword, saying :—" I swear to seek Roquelaure, and to aim all my blows at him !"—" We swear the same unanimously !" exclaimed all the other warriors—" Roquelaure shall perish ! Roquelaure shall perish !"—At this name, at this terrible denunciation, I observed the unfortunate creature turn pale, who would have laid down her life to save that of

this rebel again whom her hopeless love had just kindled this frantic fury—I felt my blood chilled in my veins ; I would have retired, but Brégi detained me. “Let me go,” said I, “let me go,” I respect valour, but I abhor ferocity.” With these words I disengaged myself, and ran and shut myself up in my apartment.

My sister passed the whole night in the most dreadful agitation : her women told me the next morning that she never went to bed, but had walked the greatest part of the night in the ancestral hall (as we called an extensive gallery filled with family portraits ;) that she went out two hours before day-break, saying : “To-day I shall be killed, I will go and pray ;” that she accordingly repaired to the chapel, and in about an hour went and awoke the chaplain, to whom she confessed herself. At six o’clock she ordered her horse that she might go to the fight. I rose and went to embrace her, but her looks terrified me : there was a wildness in her eyes which it is impossible for me to describe. She pressed my hand, and said in a very low tone :—“I forgive him, pray for him.” She then mounted her horse and departed.

Oppressed with the most gloomy presentiments, I spent the day in tears, and found no relief but in praying to God with all the women belonging to the mansion ; but towards evening we paused every moment, imagining that we heard the sound of a horse’s feet. I flew to the window, or ran down to the court yard, and went as far as the draw-bridge : I listened, and always fancied that I heard the din of arms at a distance. Sometimes I imagined that some bad news had been received and was kept from my knowledge. I questioned all the servants, who, to dispel my

fears, assured me that we had the advantage over the enemy in point of number : they exaggerated this advantage, and I burst into tears.—I was certainly uneasy on account of Brégi, and more especially about my sister ; but my heart was racked also by another apprehension, which I was obliged to conceal ; while I was obliged to listen to the wishes which all about me were expressing for the defeat and destruction of the generous Roquelaure. “ At least,” said I, “ do not wish for his death ; such a wish is impious and reprobated by religion.” At seven at night a messenger at length arrived with the most disastrous tidings. After some preparation I was informed that on this day my sister had exposed herself to danger with inconceivable temerity, and had received a wound in the side which did not seem to be dangerous ; that Brégi, who with the utmost intrepidity had persisted in singling out and attacking Roquelaure, had been vanquished, disarmed by him, and taken prisoner ; lastly, that great numbers had fallen on both sides ; that the enemy was victorious ; that we had nevertheless effected our retreat in good order, and that our adversaries, who had engaged with very inferior numbers, had lost so many men, that notwithstanding this advantage they would be unable to keep the field because they were in want of reinforcements, with which our army could be immediately supplied. I was assured that Brégi was not wounded, so that my sister was now the only object of my anxiety : I was preparing to take horse to go and meet her, when I heard a great noise of horses approaching, and the draw bridge let down. It was she accompanied by our principal warroirs. I flew towards my sister ; she was dejected and

in pain, but her looks bespoke resignation and composure : she received me if not with affection, at least with kindness. I conducted her to her chamber ; she went to bed : a surgeon examined her wounds (for she had several,) and he assured me that I need not be uneasy. She shewed me a wound which she had received in the thigh, saying that it was inflicted in the heat of the battle by *the hand of Roquelaure*, adding, with a sarcastic smile :—" *this will not draw any tears from his eyes !*"—and, without giving me time to reply, she ordered me to retire. I offered to sit up with her, but she drily repeated her order to go to bed, and I obeyed. I had got to the door of her chamber, when she called me back and looked me full in the face. " You must be very uneasy, I suppose," said she, " about poor Brégi." " He is not wounded, I understand." " I donot know, but he fought with such intrepidity that he can scarcely help being so ; at any rate he is a prisoner, and in the power of an enemy, of a rival." " On that very account he will be the better treated." " What an opinion you have of that man ! Beware of him—but now go, leave me." So saying she drew her curtain. I answered only with a deep sigh, and retired. I was so agitated that I had no hopes of being able to sleep a wink all night, and threw myself, without undressing, upon my bed. At six in the morning my maid entered my chamber, crying out that Brégi was come. I ran immediately into the passage, where I met Brégi, and went with him into a room.—He informed me that Roquelaure, when he learnt his name, and that he was on the eve of marriage with me, had instantly set him at liberty, and refused every kind of ransom.* " This magnanimous foe," con-

* Historical.

tinued Brégi, "has blended with this generous procedure a chivalrous gallantry which augments its merit. Here is a note, which he requested me to deliver to you." At these words, moved to the very bottom of my soul, I took the paper with a trembling hand, and read as follows :—

"I restore to you the man whom you love! I will not be the disturber of happiness, a jewel very rarely met with in the toilsome pilgrimage of this dreary life, in which so many anguished hearts groan without hope and without consolation. That you may both enjoy uninterrupted happiness, is the sincere wish of

ROQUELAURE."

Just as I had finished reading this affecting note, a servant came to tell us that my sister, having heard of Brégi's return, desired to see us both; we therefore repaired to her apartment. I perceived an alteration in her looks, which struck me, but the surgeon entertained no apprehensions. She questioned Brégi, who repeated the account which he had given me, adding a great many other circumstances. "I must confess," continued he, "that I never saw a man for whom I felt so much esteem: in his whole person there is a dignity which bespeaks the elevation of his soul, and at the same time a tincture of melancholy and a tenderness which are powerfully interesting. He spoke to me concerning you," said Brégi, turning to me, "and of the pain he suffered on account of the accident to which you had nearly fallen a victim. I told him that you had perfectly recovered from it; he replied he knew that, because he had taken the necessary precautions to be informed of your condition. He repeated that after such an event, he consider-

ed it his duty to seize an opportunity of rendering you a service; but he particularly desired me to assure you that even supposing this unlucky accident had never happened, he should not have hesitated to send back to you the husband of your choice. In short, I never witnessed such kindness, such generosity. I could not help observing how deeply I regretted that he was engaged in so bad a cause. "I shall forsake it," replied he, "as soon as I can do so with honour; I have promised I would, and this engagement I hold sacred."

During this relation, every word of which penetrated to the bottom of my heart, the agitation of my unhappy sister was inexpressible; I observed her several times change colour. Notwithstanding the too lively interest which I took in this recital, I could have wished it had been in my power to silence Brégi, who was at length interrupted by my sister. "Without doubt," said she, while her feelings frequently checked her utterance, "he could not speak to you concerning me but with horror?"—"By no means," answered Brégi; "nay, he even highly admires your courage: he calls you a heroine; but he knows that you hate him."—"That I hate him!"—"Yes, and indeed you are wrong: it is carrying the spirit of party to too great lengths."—At this moment the surgeon entered, felt my sister's pulse, and told us that she was feverish, and that our conversation did her harm. Alas! I knew it but too well already. He sent us out of her chamber. I got rid of Brégi, under the pretext that having passed a sleepless night I had need of rest. I ran and shut myself in a closet, where, without molestation, I could give a free vent to my sorrows. For more than an hour I shed bitter tears,

without one single distinct idea. I was deeply sensible of my misfortunes: their weight oppressed me the more as I had never yet had courage to look them in the face, but shrunk from the very thoughts of them. At length I probed my heart, and there I found a guilty and insensate passion for an object from whom every thing concurred to separate me, and that too when I had plighted my faith to another!—Each succeeding reflection aggravated my distress. I was the rival of a sister, a benefactress, whom her jealousy would perhaps consign to the tomb.—How was I to sooth her misery, raised as it was to the highest pitch! My presence was hateful to her; I was afraid of speaking to her; she refused my attentions; I had neither guide nor adviser.—In the midst of these melancholy reflections, I read Roquelaure's note again; and this affecting pledge of a love so delicate and so generous aggravated my grief, by increasing my gratitude and my admiration. "O Roquelaure!" I exclaimed, "it is I—I alone, who am *without hope*, as well as *without consolation*. Thou hast nothing to reproach thyself with: thy noble heart was free; thou hadst a right to dispose of it. Thou wilt not be compelled to contract a hateful alliance; thou at least enjoyest thy generosity; the remembrance of me will not be accompanied with aught that should tinge thy cheek; thou hast tasted the felicity of hoping for a moment, and of declaring thy sentiments to the object of thy preference; finally glory will make thee amends worthy of thy great soul, while I, unhappy wretch, must conceal a criminal passion which thou shalt never have known of, while I shall be the prey of torments and remorse, without being able to hope for thy pity."

In these painful reflections I was indulging

when the surgeon came to inform me that he began to be uneasy at the state of my sister, and that her fever began to assume an alarming character : he added that she was enquiring for me. I went to her immediately. She sent away her women, and desired me to sit down within the curtains of her bed. She was so oppressed that it was some moments before she could speak : at length she asked me if I had preserved Roquelauré's note. I replied that I still had it. "What!" exclaimed she, "when you have plighted your faith to another!"—"Brégi himself has read the note, which was not sealed."—"Brégi has read it ! but was he aware of its real signification ? For the rest, you are still free ; and if your heart is changed, if you feel disinclined to the match, you may still break it off ; as your guardian, I allow and authorize you to do it." These words she uttered with an effort which proved to me how dear this kind of indulgence and generosity cost her.—"No!" cried I, "no, I will keep my word. The chaplain can leave his room ; to-morrow, the first thing in the morning, I will marry Brégi!"—At these words my sister threw both her arms about my neck, and pressed me with transport to her bosom. Our tears mingled together. This moment, which irrevocably fixed my fate, and destroyed the happiness of my whole future life, was nevertheless productive of some satisfaction to me. I had given my unfortunate sister the only consolation which she could possibly receive. I felt my resolution strengthened, and my grief become less poignant ; and such will always be the happy fruits of a virtuous sacrifice. In a few minutes my sister, inclining her face towards my ear, whispered : "I should like to see his writing." I had no difficulty to guess that she wished to read Roquelauré's note. I took it from my

bosom and gave it to her. Her hands trembled so violently that she could scarcely hold it. She read it more than once to herself, and then returned it wet with her tears. I took it and tore it in pieces. "Ah! what are you doing?" cried she. "It is my duty," answered I, "to forget its contents; to think of them to-morrow would be a crime. Brégi shall be my husband." "O, my dear girl!" she exclaimed, "that I had possessed the same command over myself! In that case I should not now be the victim of a passion which is hurrying me to the grave. No positive duty indeed forbade it; but it was such as reason could not approve. Instead of banishing a dangerous idea from my imagination, I suffered myself to be absorbed by it. I made it the subject of all my reveries, and of the most chimerical hopes.

"I had soon but one single thought, to which all my plans and all my actions were subordinate; my sensibility was inflamed, my reason clouded; all the other soft affections which had till then constituted the delight of my life, were weakened; nay, I imagined that they were wholly extinguished in my heart, because I compared them with that impetuous passion which there reigned with sovereign sway. Lastly, a cruel jealousy infinitely aggravated my pangs. You have just dispelled its most tormenting fears; and now I feel that I slandered my heart, when I fancied that I had ceased to love you. Ah! may the spectacle of a vehement passion, and of the injustice and evils which it produces, be at least a wholesome lesson to you; and be assured that it is impossible for a female to fall into this species of insanity except by an inexcusable weakness, and when she has made no effort to retain the command over herself." Deeply affected while listening to

this painful and impressive confession, I embraced my sister, and offered every consolation that my tenderness could suggest. She seemed to grow more composed ; and I flattered myself that this conversation, by soothing her sorrows, would contribute to her recovery.

From that moment I determined to banish Roquelaure from my memory for ever : to think, thenceforward, of nothing but the good qualities of Brégi and my duty ; to avoid being left alone with my own heart ; above all, to shun indolence, and to throw myself into the arms of religion, who strengthens the weak, who blesses pure intentions, and whose divine precepts are capable of supplying the want of experience, by preserving us from that levity which leads us into errors.

The next morning I rose at the first dawn of day, and inquired concerning my sister. I was told that she had passed a bad night, but had been asleep about an hour. I had the preceding evening, communicated my intentions to Brégi, who, overjoyed came to conduct me to the chapel. My dejection, and the redness of my eyes, afflicted, but without surprising him. My sister's condition might but too well account for the extreme depression of my spirits.—I went to the foot of the altar to pronounce the irrevocable vow ! I promised from the bottom of my soul, attachment and constancy : religion required nothing more. I prayed that I might be happy ; or in other words for peace of heart and virtue.

On leaving the chapel, we went to my sister and presented my husband to her. She received me with open arms : her caresses gave me pain. This was the first emotion that I had to stifle in the recesses of my heart.—But this unfortunate sister soon engaged my whole attention.—She con-

tinued to grow visibly worse; and a physician, whom I sent for the first day, and who only came that morning, declared that she was in danger. My grief was inexpressible; but it was infinitely heightened, when the same evening, the physician told us he had no hopes of saving her life. She desired that the sacraments might be administered, and received them with the most impressive piety. I passed the night in her chamber. An hour before day-light she wrote a few lines. She then ordered all the attendants to leave the room; and, calling me, directed me to sit down, and listen to what she should say. She held in her hand a small crucifix, of which the cross was lapis lazuli, enriched with diamonds, and the Christ of gold. This she shewed to me saying, "I have disposed of this crucifix, which was given me by our mother. Roquelaure will renounce his errors!—Promise me to send him this crucifix with that paper!"—As she uttered these words, she delivered to me a note, which she ordered me to read. It was as follows:

"In a few moments I shall be no more!—A consolatory presentiment, a sudden light, mitigate for me all the horrors of death! You will soon abjure your fatal errors. O Roquelaure! the wishes of the dying are sacred. Let the first profession of faith, on your conversion, be pronounced at the foot of this cross, upon which I shall presently exhale my last breath!"

After reading this note, I fell on my knees, shedding a torrent of tears. My sister took both my hands in her's, and pressed them to her heart with the warmest affection. I solemnly promised to fulfil her last injunctions: she embraced and dies—

sed me : she energetically recommended my happiness to Brégi; and from that moment every thing in her announced perfect composure and resignation. In a few minutes she expired in my arms.

My grief knew no bounds ; religion alone was capable of moderating its excess. Brégi undertook the melancholy duty of paying the last honours to my unfortunate sister, in the funeral ceremonies there was a pomp and a singularity which drew together all the persons of consequence in Auvergne, who, moreover owed this homage to her memory for the courage which she had displayed in delivering the province from the violence and depredations of the rebels. All the warriors whom love and hope had armed in the good cause, and assembled under its banners, appeared in the procession : a crown of laurel and her sword were laid upon the coffin. On the marble monument was engraved a Latin inscription, to this effect :

“She was at once the example and the model of pure virgins, of virtuous wives, and of intrepid warriors.”

Meanwhile I was not unmindful of the order which she had given me when expiring ; but how was it to be executed ? I was determined to have no direct communication with Roquelaure ; and besides I knew that he had left the province. After mature reflection, I thought it best to employ Brégi to execute this sacred injunction. I acquainted him with the secret of the unfortunate passion which my sister had conceived for Roquelaure ; and delivered to him the note and the crucifix. Brégi thought it perfectly natural that my sister should have carefully concealed a passion which would have inflamed the hatred of so many rivals devoted to her service,

and who had been taught to hope that she would not chuse a husband except out of their number. He promised that he would find means to transmit, in secret, to Roquelaure, this affecting and sacred pledge of such an ill-fated passion. He was of opinion that the peace would bring Roquelaure to Paris and to court; and as we were also to be there in a short time, it was determined that we should wait.

My sister had left me her whole fortune. Business detained us near two months in Auvergne; but at length we set out for Paris. We went to take leave of M. D***, whose mansion I could not visit without emotion. Passing near the ditch where I had gathered the flowers and received the wound, I perceived with surprise, that on the spot had been erected a pillar of white marble, with this inscription:—*In expiation of an involuntary crime, and to found a perpetual memorial, there will be given at this place, every year, on the 8th of September, at eleven o'clock in the morning, the sum of fifty crowns, and a nosegay of the wild flowers which grow in the ditch about this column, to the most virtuous, most irreproachable, and poorest village girl of this district.* Roquelaure, before his departure, had erected this pillar and provided for the continuance of the gift for ever.

This ingenious contrivance, and this affecting recollection, revived in my heart sentiments yet scarcely stifled. Brégi designed to spend a few days at the house of M. D***; but I dissuaded him from that intention. The place renewed impressions that were extremely painful; and each moment seemed to aggravate my perturbation and chagrin. We proceeded thence to Aurillac: there we saw the renowned Guy de Veire, who, a

few years before, having been chosen by the inhabitants, from among the lowest class of the people, to defend the town against the Calvinists, saved it by his courage, and was ennobled for his meritorious conduct on this occasion*.

The treaty between Henry III. and the king of Navarre did not put an end to the war amongst all the parties: some yet continued in arms. Roquelaure joined that of the king, and obtained a commission in the corps commanded by the brave Lanoue, into which Brégi likewise entered. Being continually in the company of Roquelaure, he assured him of the high esteem which he had conceived for him, and eagerly sought his friendship. With equal emotion and astonishment Roquelaure received the crucifix and my sister's note from his hands. When I first delivered these to Brégi, I positively declared to him, that, considering Roquelaure as the cause of my unfortunate sister's death, it would be impossible for me to endure the sight of him; that I could not even hear his name uttered without pain, and that I was determined never to admit him into my house. Brégi was grieved at this resolution; but told me he had perceived that I harboured this kind of resentment, which he thought unjust, since Roquelaure had nothing to reproach himself with: "Nevertheless," added he, "I will not lay you under any constraint; I will not bring Roquelaure to you, and will avoid all mention of him in your presence."

A few months afterwards I learned with sorrow that we were likely to have more fighting. Henry III. appointed Lanoue to the command of two thousand men under the duke de Longueville. But the supplies of money failed; La-

* Historical.

notre flew to Compiègne : the tradesmen refused to deliver the provisions and stores which he wanted to throw into Senlis on any other terms than for ready money. Lanoue applied to some of the farmers of the revenue, and from them also he received a denial. "*Well, well,*" said he, "*then I must defray the expence myself: let those keep their money who value it more than honour.*" Lanoue actually mortgaged all his estates to raise the necessary supplies. I am fond of recording such anecdotes, because they are particularly characteristic of our nation; among the French the most generous disinterestedness always goes hand in hand with the most distinguished valour; and yet Henry III. the prince who was thus served, was neither possessed nor was worthy of the love of his subjects. But what signifies it? In a monarchy ought not every man of honour to support the throne? How many actions of this kind have we not witnessed. We had already seen marshal de Brissac, who commanded in Piedmont, mortgage and sell his estates, break off the marriage of his daughter, and apply her dowry to the purpose of paying the troops, and of reimbursing the merchants, who upon his word had advanced supplies. We have since seen the virtuous Sully cut down and sell his timber in order to provide for the expences of the war, and a Crillon, a Bassompierre, and many other illustrious warriors, offer and give all that they possessed in times of urgent public distress. (5)

Meanwhile frequent skirmishes took place before Senlis. Roquelaure, who at Paris had received the demonstrations of friendship and the advances of Brégi, if not with coldness, at least with extreme reserve, never quitted him in battle, and watched over his welfare with all the affection

of the most intimate friend. I had remained at Paris, a prey to anxieties the more afflicting, as I durst not more than half avow them to myself. I had the tenderest friendship for Brégi : this attachment and duty would speedily have triumphed over an unfortunate sentiment, had not every thing, by an unaccountable fatality, conspired to recall incessantly to my mind, and to exhibit in the most interesting points of view, that very object which I was most solicitous to banish from my thoughts. One day when I was shut up alone in my closet, in greater agitation and uneasiness than ever, a servant announced the arrival of a messenger, who brought me the following letter from Brégi :

“I owed my liberty to Roquelaure, and now I am indebted to him for my life, which he has saved at the hazard of his own. In the late action he has received a very severe wound, but which, God be thanked, is not at all dangerous. I flatter myself that you will not think it strange if I shall henceforth be devoted till death to this incomparable man, so magnanimous in his conduct, so heroic in his friendship. I should entreat you to overcome your aversion to the sight of him, had he not himself conceived a similar repugnance, since he became acquainted with the sentiments which your unhappy sister entertained for him : because, as he told me, he was sure you could not see him without pain. I must own I have endeavoured to remove this idea, but in vain : I hope, however, that in time I shall succeed. I shall not be completely happy till I enjoy the inexpressible satisfaction of finding myself at home, between an adored wife, and a friend so worthy of my love and admiration.”

This letter excited a thousand contending senti-

ments. It raised my gratitude and esteem for Roquelaure to the highest pitch, for I could not doubt that in all he did for Brégi he was influenced solely by a desire to promote my happiness; and how was it possible not to entertain the warmest admiration for that heroic generosity and delicacy which caused him to refuse opportunities of seeing me. I was pleased with Brégi for his enthusiasm and his attachment to such a man; but at the same time, when I considered the secret motives of Roquelaure's actions, I could not help feeling a sort of confusion, which was very much like remorse, when I saw Brégi dote to such excess upon one who in the bottom of his soul was his rival. When I heard him complain of my dislike of Roquelaure, it seemed as if we were both deluding him; I felt I had reason to be glad that I had been able to conceal my sentiments from Roquelaure; and yet I was vexed that he should be ignorant of them. "Were he acquainted with them," thought I, "he would feel the higher esteem for my conduct; all these painful efforts, all these sacrifices would not be thrown away; Roquelaure would admire them: all these tears would be less bitter, for I should have his pity—Besides, he would himself be less wretched. Oh! how can he suppose that I can be insensible to such magnanimity! he must consequently believe me to possess an ordinary soul—Alas! he thinks that my heart was pre-occupied by a vehement passion, he, who so well knows the inviolable fidelity of genuine love! My secret, carried to the tomb, will therefore be buried in the everlasting silence of death.

These reflections rent my heart, and I found it every day more and more difficult to prevent them from obtruding themselves on my mind.

The genius and bravery of Lanoue soon relieved me from the most cruel of my alarms. The duke de Longueville, who had the chief command, and who was thoroughly sensible of the talents of Lanoue, now matured by experience, resigned his authority to the latter, and determined to fight under him like any other officer.* Lanoue, with eight hundred horse and fifteen hundred foot, defeated an army of twelve thousand men, and saved Senlis. Immediately after the battle, several officers came to him to receive his instructions. "Go to M. de Longueville for orders," said he; and then went and gave back the command which he had lent him for a few hours.*

How great was my satisfaction on hearing these happy tidings, and at the same time that Brégi had distinguished himself by his intrepidity, and that Roquelaure, in this memorable victory, had displayed equal intelligence, talent, and valour—I was sincerely rejoiced to see my husband again: I firmly resolved to think of him alone; but he was incessantly talking to me of Roquelaure: his friendship for him had become one of the strongest sentiments of his heart. In a few months he informed me that Roquelaure, who had for a year been receiving instructions in the truths of religion, was going to renounce the errors of Calvinism. To me this circumstance afforded the most powerful and soothing consolation: there was every reason to believe that the great soul of Roquelaure had yielded to conviction alone; but to me he owed the sudden resolution of receiving instruction; but for me he would perhaps never have come to this determination, or at least

* Historical.

his conversion would have been postponed to a much later period. It seemed to me as if his recantation, by expiating my weakness, purified our sentiments of all that was criminal and profane, and that it for ever formed a fraternal and sacred tie between us. Brégi, being invited by him to the ceremony, which was to be performed with great solemnity, wished to make him a present of a beautiful catholic prayer-book. "You have one," said he to me, "that is truly splendid, for the excellence of the miniatures and the magnificence of the binding: you would second the last wishes of your sister by allowing me to have it to present to him in your name, and after all that he has done for me, this gift would be highly appropriate." This proposal was but too much in unison with the secret feelings of my heart for it to be possible for me to reject it. Brégi pressed me to write a sentence on a blank page of this book; and I accordingly wrote these words from the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy:— *Thou shalt consider in thine heart that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.*

Brégi, well pleased with his success, took the book and set out with it for the church where the ceremony was to take place, while I shut myself up in my oratory; and never did I pray to God with greater confidence and fervour. I thought of Roquelaure without remorse and without confusion: I represented his person to myself without danger: I saw him at the foot of the altar: I heard him join me to invoke him who strengthens the weak, him who imparts strength to conquer the passions. Methought a divine hand now purified my heart, healed all its wounds, and restored to it the delicious tranquillity of innocence. To me Roquelaure was now but a beloved

brother! "O thou, who through me art brought back to the true religion," I exclaimed, "thou oughtst to be thankful to heaven for the accident which brought us together! I shall have cost thee some sighs during the rapid course of this frail and transient life, but thou wilt bless me in eternity: in this world every thing has conspired to separate us, but the oath which thou art this moment pronouncing will unite us for ever in the abodes of bliss. Let no unworthy thought henceforth mingle with such exalted ideas and profane so sacred a friendship. Yes, I feel that I am a partaker of the divine grace which God bestows on the new convert, and which thou art this moment receiving. The faith which thou embracest, the light which sheds its influence upon thee, operate also upon my heart; they raise me above myself.—Oh! have not I also fatal errors to renounce!—O, Roquelaure! O, my brother! I vow never more to think of thee but in the presence of God, of that supreme judge of the purity of our sentiments! Yes, I will shun thee without a pang: I will perform my duty with cheerfulness, with joy; I shall be happy through virtue, I shall derive ineffable satisfaction from the consciousness of innocence. Far be from me unruly wishes, secret complaints, criminal and superfluous regret!—I do more than submit, I embrace with transport so noble a destiny."

This enthusiasm was sincere, and it had an extraordinary influence on my sentiments and situation. If I have since felt some secret emotions which it has been my duty to repress, it has at least cost me but little to stifle them, and they have never disturbed the happiness of my union with Brégi. From that moment I made it my whole study to please my husband, and to strength-

en the esteem which was due to his excellent qualities. An infallible method of kindling in our bosoms an ardent attachment to those whom duty commands us to love is to devote ourselves to their happiness: we soon conceive an affection for objects which engage our constant attention; to bestow this constant attention we must be continually thinking of them; and how is it possible to forbear loving when we excite profound gratitude, and deserve that return?

As soon as the ceremony of Roquelaure's recantation was over, Brégi came back to me. He told me that Roquelaure had received my prayer-book with extreme emotion, and desired him to say that he would read a prayer in it every day, and would keep it most carefully as long as he lived. Brégi added that Roquelaure during the whole ceremony had displayed the sincerest piety and devotion. I thanked God from the bottom of my soul, and secretly commended myself for having for the first time heard Roquelaure's name uttered without pain and agitation.

Some time afterwards Brégi conceived the idea of procuring Roquelaure a very advantageous establishment, by bringing about a match between him and a young widow, Madame de L***, who was a friend of mine, and possessed an immense fortune. I approved the plan. Madame de L*** was a woman of illustrious birth, great beauty, and irreproachable character. I undertook to speak to her concerning Roquelaure; I related to her all that he had done for Brégi. I succeeded in interesting her to such a degree, that she was anxious to see him, and soon confessed that if she were beloved by him she should prefer him to every other man with whom she was acquainted.

Brégi, who was delighted to think how agreeably he should surprize his friend, had not communicated our design to him; but when the business was sufficiently matured, he proposed to me to speak to her; "For I know Roquelaure," continued he: "the fortune of Madame de L***, and the advantages of this alliance, will not be sufficient inducements with him. Exclusively of the austerity of his principles, and the delicacy of his sentiments, I know that he is strongly attached to liberty, and that he will never sacrifice it for a woman for whose virtues and whose character he has not a profound esteem. Madame de L*** is your friend; you are more intimate with her than I am; it is therefore your province to pronounce her panegyric, and you alone can fix the determination of Roquelaure. Consider, moreover, that you cannot refuse the visits of the husband of your friend."—"No, certainly," I replied, "when he is so; but this match is yet uncertain, and as I am thoroughly convinced that such an interview would be useless, because you may say every thing that I can, relieve me from the pain of unnecessarily seeing a man to whom I ascribe the death of my sister. I esteem him, and am sincerely interested in his welfare: but his presence would revive disagreeable recollections, and give me real pain." Brégi urged me no farther; his resolution was taken. He left me, and went straight to Roquelaure. He assured him that I wished to speak with him immediately on an affair of importance. Roquelaure, surprised and confounded, in vain enquired what I could want: Brégi hurried him away, and brought him to me.

How great was my surprise when my door opened abruptly, and Brégi suddenly entered, followed by Roquelaure. At this unexpected ap-

pearance my heart palpitated with such violence that I thought I should have fainted ; I attempted to rise, but fell back on my chair. " Ah ! Brégi," exclaimed Roquelaure, " you have deceived me ; she did not want me : she did not expect me."—With these words he turned back, and was going towards the door, when Brégi detained him. I could not endure the idea that he should attribute the state in which he saw me to antipathy, and perhaps to the most unjust and extravagant hatred : this idea gave me fresh strength, and I called him back. " Believe me said I, " notwithstanding the painful recollections which your presence renews, notwithstanding acute regret occasioned by the unhappy end of a sister and a benefactress, I am deeply sensible how much I owe you, and share the gratitude and all the sentiments of your friend."—Brégi was delighted with the peaceful tenor of this address, for which he tenderly thanked me. His thanks made me blush, and threw me into as much confusion as ever. I looked trembling at Roquelaure ; our eyes met, and the expression of his made me shudder. He turned pale, and rested against the chimney-piece. In this moment, which it is impossible to describe, I was overpowered by an inexpressible feeling of mingled confusion, remorse, and secret joy.—It seemed as if I had revealed every thing, as if Roquelaure had heard and answered me. I was confounded and overwhelmed. Brégi resumed to assure Roquelaure that after this first interview I should not be so strange. " No, no," replied Roquelaure, " there are impressions which time cannot weaken." I made a violent effort over myself to interrupt this conversation, and reminded Brégi that it was time to inform his friend of our hopes and plans in re-

gard to him. Upon this Brégi explained the business in a long address, to which I added a high panegyric on Madame de L***. Roquelaure listened to us with icy coldness; then addressing me, "May I venture, madam," said he, with mingled emotion and earnestness, "to ask if this strange idea originated with you?" I was thunderstruck, and had not power to reply. "No," said Brégi, "it was I who first conceived the idea; but why do you think it *strange*?"—"Because I have told you a thousand times that I have an invincible aversion to marriage."—"But consider the beauty of Madame de L***, her virtues, her fortune!"—"I have made up my mind never to marry."—"You are so young, my friend; at your age such a resolution cannot be irrevocable."—"I shall never change it. I have devoted my life to my country, to friendship; I have placed all my happiness in a good conscience, and in the esteem of those I love.—While fortune affords me opportunities of performing useful actions, or making generous sacrifices, my existence will not be burdensome to me. Is it not a thousand times more gratifying to be content with yourself than to enjoy the favours of fortune together with a heart into which you dare not penetrate, and are afraid to examine?—My happiness is not subject to the caprices of chance; it is independent as my mind: my will determines and fixes it for ever; for no human event can prevent us from *living and thinking virtuously*."—At these words, uttered with the expression of the most profound sensibility, involuntary tears flowed from my eyes; and the admiration which extorted them was of a character so exalted and so pure that I felt no embarrassment on account of them. Brégi was equally affected, and Roquelaure, who was him-

self moved, paused, and looked at us both. After a moment's silence, he rose, came up to me, and with an agitation which alarmed me, "Farewell, madam," said he, "farewell! It is most gratifying to me to carry away the remembrance of your heart-felt favours, but I will not abuse your generous sensibility, and I think I can give you no stronger proof of my gratitude than in depriving myself of the pleasure of ever seeing you again." Without waiting for my answer, he hastily withdrew, and was followed by Brégi.

For several days the image of Roquelaure haunted me incessantly. I had continually before my eyes that elegant and majestic figure, that interesting face, in which were expressed all the emotions of a tender and magnanimous heart. All his words engraved upon my memory seemed to have erased from it every other idea--those ingenious words whose real meaning was to me so impressive. I fancied that I still heard the inflexions of his voice. I succeeded at length, by keeping myself constantly employed, in banishing these cherished recollections; but they were not so dangerous for me as might be imagined. Roquelaure's magnanimity awakened in me a useful emulation; to raise my ideas to that elevation, to that sublimity of virtue, was to approach nearer to him. I no longer represented him to myself under the character of an impassioned lover: I beheld in him only an enlightened judge, a generous friend, and a pattern of human perfection. The happiness and glory of resembling and equaling him rendered the greatest sacrifices easy to me, and the inexpressible satisfaction of admiring him with enthusiasm consoled me under all vexations. Oh! how easy it is to strengthen ourselves in virtue, when we find in what we love that hap-

py conformity of ideas, sentiments and principles ! With what alacrity we can advance in this noble career, when a beloved object precedes and invites us to follow in it.

Roquelaure by his conduct acquired new claims to my gratitude. Brégi, with an excellent heart and a thousand good qualities, had the misfortune to be passionately attached to gaming : and though our fortune was large, yet this ruinous propensity had, during the three years that we had been married, considerably deranged our affairs.

One day when Brégi was with Roquelaure in a house where a party of gamblers was assembled, he joined them ; and in spite of the remonstrances of his friend, who never engaged in games of chance, he persisted, played all night, and lost fifty thousand francs, for the payment of which he gave his word. Roquelaure remained with him till the party broke up ; when Brégi, overwhelmed with despair, returned home, and could not conceal from me his extreme embarrassment. He had promised to pay within twenty-four hours ; he had no money, and we agreed to mortgage an estate, and to have recourse to money-brokers, in order to obtain that sum immediately.

Brégi was deeply sensible of this last indiscretion, which could not fail to produce the total derangement of our affairs. I did not reproach him, but continued silent : he was overwhelmed with deep dejection, when a letter was brought him from Roquelaure. He read it hastily with extreme emotion, his eyes filled with tears ; he rose and gave me the letter, saying : " Read it, and see if there exists a friend who can be compared with that ! I am going to him to sign the irrevocable promise which he desires." At these words

Brégi withdrew, and I read the letter, which was as follows :

“ Your debt is paid, and I have inclosed you the receipt. The state of my finances is such that I have no occasion for that sum, and you would disoblige me exceedingly if you think of returning it in less than three years. Let me intreat you, my dear Brégi, to make one reflection ; you have a most generous and tender heart, and a fortune superior to mine, and yet it would not be in your power to render a service of this kind to your best friend, or to make a prompt and useful sacrifice in these troublesome times to your king and country ! Think seriously of this, and you will cease to be a gamester. You have told me a thousand times that there is nothing in the world which you would not be capable of doing for my sake. Well then, my dear Brégi I will put you to the test ; give me your word of honour that you will from this moment and for ever abstain from games of chance, and my gratitude shall be as lively and sincere as the friendship which I have vowed to you for life.”

This letter made me doubly happy, both in the tranquillity which it assured to me, and in the satisfaction of owing it to the noble and virtuous Roquelaure. Brégi actually entered into a solemn engagement never to play again, and he kept his word with the most scrupulous fidelity.

Fresh troops and fresh misfortunes obliged Henry III. to retire precipitately from Paris : he fled to Chartres, and the duke of Guise, being left sole master of Paris, ruled there with despotic sway.* A venerable old man, whose name will never die, Achille de Harlay, first president

* Historical.

of the parliament, having to the very last continued true to his sovereign, enforced the sacred precepts of duty and virtue, amidst the shouts and menaces of the seditious; and with the same composure and energy as when the whole nation applauded his masculine eloquence with all the transports of deserved admiration, having positively refused to fly when he might easily have escaped, he returned to his house, when he found it impossible to gain a hearing, and was obliged to leave the hall, the doors of which were fastened by the factious. This great man calmly retired to his garden, under the persuasion that his enemies would follow and murder him there, conceiving that they durst not kill him in the streets for fear of the people, by whom he was equally beloved and revered. All at once he heard the doors of his house open with a loud noise, and a great number of armed men enter; it was the duke of Guise, who, with a numerous retinue, was come, according to his own expression, *to pay him a visit*. The president perfectly understood them; he was half way down an alley; but without turning his head or quickening his pace, he proceeded to the end of it before he turned back. He then slowly advanced, with his hands behind him, and a look of the utmost serenity and dignity. The duke of Guise, who ardently desired to corrupt him (which the head of a party always thinks he can do,) hastily went forward to meet him, and paid him the most flattering compliment. Harlay listened with unchanged countenance, and replied in these memorable words; “’Tis a great pity when the servant supplants the master; for the rest, my soul belongs to God, my heart to my sovereign, and my body is in the power of wicked men; let them do with it what they please*.” Hav-

ing thus spoken, he continued his walk with the same composure as before. The duke was petrified ; he was not destitute of greatness of soul ; his admiration got the better of his resentment, and the life of the greatest magistrate of France was spared†.

The year following, Friar Ange de Joyeuse, who had once displayed such valour in the military profession, quitted his convent, and went at the head of his monks to implore Henry III. to resume the noble functions of king. This extraordinary deputation gave a momentary impulse to that unfortunate monarch ; but he speedily reverted to his natural indolence.

Friar Ange, instigated by his opinions and his conscience, not by ambition, to return to a military life, eminently proved that religion and piety, instead of diminishing great courage, only tend on the contrary to exalt it. He received the staff of marshal of France from the victorious hands of Henry IV. ; and almost immediately afterwards buried his glory in eternal solitude ; he returned to his convent and never left it more.

We were still at Paris, and I sometimes visited one of my female friends at her country house in the vicinity of that city. The garden of this house communicated by means of a little gate with the park of the fashionable countess of S***. I was averse from forming an acquaintance with this lady, whose character was somewhat equivocal ; but Brégi, attracted as he said by the charms

* Historical.

† Historical. A magistrate of an illustrious family (the first president Molé) afterwards displayed, during the regency of Anne of Austria, the same courage, the same virtues, and the same heroic fidelity to his sovereign.

of the situation, paid her frequent visits. Roque-laure, who had become the guardian angel of Brégi, went thither also to take care of his friend in a house which to him appeared in every point of view dangerous.

One night, about twelve o'clock, Brégi told me that he was going to spend an hour with the countess, who was giving a little entertainment, to which he was invited. He accordingly left me in considerable haste. Every body in our house was in bed, and as the night was excessively hot, I felt inclined, as soon as Brégi was gone, to take a breath of air, and went down stairs into the garden. As I passed the little gate, I observed that it was half opened. It must have flown open again after he pulled it to, without his perceiving it: he had the key of it in his pocket. From a motive of curiosity, I determined to take advantage of his carelessness, passed through the gate and entered the park of the countess of S***. It was not large, so that I soon reached the end of it: there I saw an iron gate leading to the court, beyond which was the house. The gate was shut, and I remarked with surprise that all was quiet and silent, and that no lights were to be seen in the house. Where then, thought I, are they making this entertainment to which Brégi is invited? Without bestowing any farther thought on this contradictory circumstance, I determined to return by the way I had come, and to keep along by the wall that I might not lose myself in the park, where I had never been before. I had to pass through a long alley, bordered on one side by the wall, and on the other by a hedge of horn-beam. All at once I heard some one speaking behind this hedge, and advancing as softly as possible on tip-toe, and listening at the same time, I recognized

the voices of Brégi and Roquelaure. I stopped with an emotion which it is impossible to describe. They were seated on a bench, conversing with the greatest earnestness, and I overheard the following dialogue.

"Dont put yourself in a passion, my dear Brégi; we can't settle the matter so well while we are walking: all I request is that you would give me a quarter of an hour's attention." "Pray put an end to your foolery: you have the key of the gate, I tell you." "Suppose I have, what then?" "I want to get into the house." "I know it, and I mean to do you a service in preventing you." "Upon my word, it is too much! notwithstanding all the gratitude I owe you, I will never submit to such tyranny, I protest." "Listen to me for two minutes without interrupting me, and then if you require it I will give you the key." "Well then, make haste." "I this morning heard the countess of S*** make an appointment to meet her to night at twelve; did she not tell you." "She has something particular to say. I promised to come, and I will keep my word." "Hitherto you have maintained the character of a man of honour, and to speak plainly, with the wife whom heaven has given you, there is no great merit in that. If you, go to that woman, and hear what she has to say, you will ruin your morals, your principles and your peace of mind." "I can solemnly assure you that it is no improper assignation: she is in great trouble, and wishes to open her heart to me, and ask my advice." "Open her heart to you!—Ask the advice of a person ten years younger than herself! She wants to seduce you, that's her object. She hates your wife, who keeps her at a distance; she is envious of her youth, her

beauty, her unspotted reputation (for vice is the natural enemy of virtue;) she flatters herself that she shall destroy her happiness. And would you be so base as to second these black designs, and to sacrifice an incomparable wife to a woman of the loosest principles?" "No, Roquelaure; I love my wife alone, and I protest that I never said a single word to the countess of S*** which exceeded the limits of mere politeness, and that she never talked to me of any thing but confidence and friendship. Nay, more, I really think that she is deeply in love with you."—Here Roquelaure burst into a loud laugh and then rejoined: "It is true, she began to try the effect of her artifices upon me, but you saw in what manner I met her advances." "Yes, indeed with a rudeness, which from a man of your breeding would never have been expected." "This is the way to treat people of her stamp when you perceive they are forming schemes of seduction. For these six weeks she has given up all thoughts of me. I have again grown polite to her, and have continued my visits to this house where every thing disgusts me! solely to take care of you, and to watch over your happiness, which is a thousand times dearer to me than you can imagine." "Then you pretend to be my guardian, my tutor." "Just so, and that is the whole extent of my pretensions." "And yet you are but four years older than I am. But come, I tell you again that Madame de S*** has something particular to say to me, and I give you my word, that if she is so indiscreet as to speak to me, ever so indirectly, of love, I shall not hesitate to do my duty." "At least you would answer her without rudeness, like a well bred man, would you not? I give you credit for your candour: you certainly mean all that

you say ; but I know you too well : your easy and pliable disposition would yield to every thing. You shall not have the key." "I must and will have it. Did you not tell me that if I persisted, after I had heard what you had to say, you would give it to me?" "Yes, but permit me to add a word or two. Is it possible that you are not aware of the indecency of such a visit, be the pretext what it will? Consider how unseasonable the hour, your own youth, the character of that woman! What after being so weak as to be guilty of such a violation of decorum, are you not afraid for yourself, and can you rationally flatter yourself with the hope of resisting the blandishments of a coquette so thoroughly versed in her art, during a long and private interview in the middle of the night. My dear Brégi, I have no other authority over you than what sincere friendship can confer—renounce that friendship, and you will no longer be subject to it. There is the key, take it if you please; but if you do, you will dissolve all connexion between us, and I shall bid you adieu for ever!" "What, threats too?" "Oh, no, 'tis but a truth that I declare to you; this step would pierce my heart: never would I see you more, since you would prefer a base and artful woman, whom you cannot love, to sacred duties and a friend devotedly attached to you." "Your friendship is but an insupportable tyranny; you will at last require me one of these days to turn hermit or capuchin." "Here then take the key." "I ought by right, but you lead me like a child."—

Here, well assured that Brégi, notwithstanding his vexation, would obey the dictates of reason, I began to think how I should get out of the park again unperceived. I stole away as softly and as

expeditiously as possible, and soon reached mine apartment. I could not help reflecting on all that I had just heard, and what a debt of gratitude I owed to Roquelaure. In order to be thoroughly sensible of it, I represented to myself what would have become of Brégi, with his easy disposition, his warm passions, and his indiscretion, without so vigilant a guardian! I could not forget that Brégi owed to him not only the preservation of his principles, his morals, his character, and his fortune, which, but for Roquelaure, the baneful passion of gaming would have totally dissipated, but that he likewise owed him his life, which Roquelaure had saved in battle at the hazard of his own!—What pleasure I felt in recalling to mind all these immense obligations! with what delight I considered that Roquelaure, influenced by a sentiment of which none but himself was capable, had thus devoted his whole existence to his rival, merely to promote my welfare! In spite of all that separated us, he had so far made himself the arbiter of my destiny as to be the founder and preserver of my happiness. His love, a profound secret to all the world besides, was incessantly displaying itself to my view in actions of unparalleled generosity: I met with it in all the important events of my life, nay, even in the virtues of my husband, and in the harmony of our union.

I had not time that night to pursue these gratifying reflections. Brégi came home in about a quarter of an hour, somewhat ruffled: but by the next morning he had recovered his usual cheerfulness: he could talk of nothing but Roquelaure, his virtue, his discretion, and the good fortune of possessing such a friend. This adventure broke off all intercourse between Brégi and the count-

ess, and I abstained from visiting my friend any more, that I might keep him away from so dangerous a neighbourhood : but it was not long before all private interests were absorbed by the important political events.

After the tragic end of the unfortunate Henry III. Roquelaure and Brégi warmly espoused the cause of his successor, the magnanimous monarch to whom Crillon so truly said: "*Sire, you will always be the king of the brave.*"*

At the period of the siege of Paris, the express command of Brégi, and the state of our affairs, obliged me to retire to my estate in Auvergne. I was then twenty-two, and had been married six years.

Scarcely had I reached my country seat, when I received tidings that completely robbed me of all hopes of happiness, and all consolation on this side of the grave!—In one of the late battles Brégi had been killed, and Roquelaure mortally wounded. It was thought that I should not survive this dreadful shock. The same night, a burning fever and a violent delirium, suspended, for at least a fortnight, the consciousness of my misfortunes. On recovering my reason, the first thing I did was to send a messenger to Paris; and I waited his return in a state of inexpressible wretchedness and anxiety. He came back in about three weeks. Heaven still reserved for me an emotion of joy. A note was brought me from Roquelaure; I opened it, and read these words in his haphd-writing :

"I am deeply sensible of your misfortune, and the loss of my friend.—He should have lived, for he was happy.—My wound is mortal. I am or-

* Historical.

dered to try the waters ; I prefer those of Mont d'Or,* where I intend to die."

I bathed this note with my tears. Roquelaure, however, was still living : I considered his youth, and a gleam of hope broke through the gloom of my heart. With what painful solicitude and impatience I waited for his coming ! Four tedious months elapsed before his arrival. I went myself to prepare a lodging for him at Mont d'Or, and under the pretence of taking the waters, I fixed myself there likewise. At length I saw him arrive : but how pale ! how altered ! he was evidently in a dying state. His wound was in the breast, and left no room for hope. He could nevertheless walk, and that without assistance : he was not in much pain, and his countenance still retained its highly interesting and amiable expression : but he appeared so weak, his voice was so feeble, his step so faltering, that he seemed to have scarcely a few moments to live. Having been prepared for a month past to meet me at the waters, he arrived about noon, having stopped the preceding night ten miles from Mont d'Or. He came immediately to my lodgings. Extremely apprehensive for his sake of the consequences of this first interview, I had sufficient self-command to repress within my bosom all those feelings which his appearance excited. So powerful was his emotion at the sight of me, that he was obliged to lay hold of the back of a chair, being unable to support himself any longer. I reached him an arm-chair, and sat down beside him, without power to speak, or to restrain my tears. I reached him my hand, which he clasped between his, saying, in broken accents : "Your happiness had

* Mont d'Or is in Auvergne.

become mine—you have lost it; why then should I regret life?" "O, Roquelaure!" I exclaimed, interrupting him, "leave me not, but live to dry my tears: live."—I stopped short: he looked stedfastly at me; his eyes sparkled: a slight flush tinged his cheeks; but immediately covering his face with both hands: "What!" said he, "deceive myself again on the brink of the grave!"—"What do you say?" cried I, hurried away by an irresistible emotion, "deceive yourself!—What! if you are assured that I love you, that I never loved with passion any other than you! Ah, Roquelaure! at length you are acquainted with the real sentiments of my soul."—At these words, Roquelaure trembling pressed my hand to his heart; "O words," said he, "that ought to renew the current of life, words that ought to disperse the shades of death, and all the gloomy recollections of past wretchedness, ye rekindle the spark of life that was ready to expire within me!—I was beloved!—I did venture, at times, to suspect as much—but I repelled the fond idea as the empty phantom of a bewildered imagination.—You love me!—and I have sighed in despair, and fancied myself generous!—No, I shall not die; I feel new life circulate in my veins.—You love me! No, I cannot die!" While thus speaking his voice acquired surprising strength and firmness; his cheeks glowed, and his eyes sparkled with the highest animation. I shared his illusion: I imagined that love had wrought a miracle, and that this unexpected joy would produce in him a revolution which might save his life.—I indulged myself in the happiness of disclosing my whole soul to him, and thus making myself amends for an absolute silence of six years. Nevertheless, this joy, which was heightened to in-

toxication, did not prevent me from feeling the wound that rankled in my heart: an inward, a terrific voice, persevering as that of remorse, cried without ceasing: "*He cannot recover.*" In vain I affected security, in vain I talked of happiness; nothing could silence this gloomy foreboding.

We passed the whole day together: he dined with me, and ate a little, assuring me that he felt quite well: his face still retained its glow, and I had never seen his eyes so brilliant. As the day declined a sort of terror came over me, and kept encreasing every moment, especially at the approach of night. At eight o'clock he rose to leave me: he reeled, turned pale, and putting out his hand as if to feel for me, he said: "Where are you?"—I trembled, and supported him in my arms: he held his hand to his eyes, and added: "it is nothing; only a slight dizziness; but it is over again."—His servant came to fetch him, and he leaned upon his arm. "Adieu," said he to me, in a low tone; "this has been a day which makes amends for a long series of sorrows. Adieu."—"Are you not unwell?" I asked him with extreme agitation. "No," said he, "I am quite well: don't make yourself uneasy."—"I am not uneasy; but I am afraid that the vehemence of your feelings has overpowered you."—"Promise me that you will go to bed."—"To be sure: why should I sit up? Are you unwell?"—"No, I am happy, very happy." "Adieu; sleep in peace—adieu—adieu." So saying he gently pressed my hand, and departed: leaving me in profound dejection. Those last words, "*Adieu, adieu,*" continued to ring in my ears, and made me shudder. Trembling, and chilled with fear, I sunk into an arm-chair, where I determined to pass the night—I was but too well persuaded of the afflicting

truth—we had each of us deceived ourselves. After the first paroxysm of enthusiasm, which had for a few moments imparted a glimmer of hope, he had soon relinquished these pleasing illusions, and been anxious only to conceal his sufferings, and the attack of a violent fever. In about an hour, he sent his valet to tell me that he had gone to bed, that he was perfectly easy, and entreated me to retire to rest. The concern expressed in the countenance of the messenger was not calculated to relieve my apprehensions.—I remained motionless, without asking him any question, or making any reply: he left me in haste, and with horror I again found myself alone.—There was a dreadful confusion in my ideas; for all those which I chased from my mind during the day returned upon me in crowds, and I would not dwell upon any of them. We lodged in different houses, but which were situated very near to one another. All at once I considered that he had no person about him to render any assistance which he might require but his valet: I immediately rose, called my maid, and taking her with me, hastened to the next house. It was ten o'clock. We entered Roquelaure's apartment without noise, and my spirits were suddenly revived when I found that all was quiet there, and above all, for finding neither nurse nor physician. A servant, who had not yet gone to bed, told me that the valet had lain down beside his master, and that both were fast asleep. The cheerful looks of the man proved a more grateful cordial than the most consolatory assurances. I arranged with him that I would send one of my people to sit up during the night, in case he should be wanted for any errand, as he was perfectly acquainted with

the village and neighbourhood of the mountain. Before I returned home, I went softly and listened at the door of his chamber, while my heart throbbed with such violence as to suspend my breath—In about a quarter of an hour I heard him cough: the tears trickled from my eyes, and on my knees I returned thanks to the Almighty; I was shure, at least, that he was yet living, though, amid the horror of my reveries, for two hours past I had so often beheld him lifeless!—It seemed as if heaven had anew restored him to me—He lived, and I thought no longer of the danger of his situation. Still continuing to listen, I heard a slight noise of cups and glasses, from which I knew that he was drinking; he must, consequently be awake; and as he neither complained nor called any body, I concluded that he must really be well. In this idea I was confirmed by the total silence which followed: I had no doubt that he had fallen asleep again, and returned home, if not without anxiety, at least buoyed up by hope.

It was now the month of July. As I could not resolve to retire to bed, I went to walk upon a terrace which commands a view of part of Mont d'Or. The atmosphere was clear and serene, and the contemplation of the spectacle of a cloudless night suddenly changing the disposition of my mind, threw me into the deepest melancholy. It requires a soul at once pious and tranquil to derive unalloyed enjoyment from the beauties of nature; their language is silent and vague, but infinitely more eloquent than the vain arguments of our understanding: they proclaim the existence of a Creator, a Supreme Ruler, and a Judge; they convince us of the littleness of all human things, which naturally appear to us to be so important. Were the ambitious man compelled to go

abroad every night, to contemplate a firmament studded with stars, and the rising sun every morning, he would be cured of his ambition.

I was absorbed in a gloomy reverie, when the village clock, striking twelve, awoke me out of it. At the same moment I heard a dog howling most lamentably: a superstitious feeling made my heart sink within me. I rose, walked across my room into a closet which looked upon a green, at the farther end of which, opposite to my window, stood the rectory. I opened the window, and had scarcely seated myself in the balcony, when I perceived at a distance a man with a lantern hastening towards the rector's house. Thrilled with a fearful presentiment, I remained motionless, with my eyes fixed on this man. When he had reached the house, he knocked repeatedly, and some person within answered him, but without opening the door. But gracious God! what was my anguish when I recognized the voice of the servant whom I had left at Roquelaure's lodgings, and heard him say: "It is for the count de Roquelaure, who is dying, and wishes to receive the sacrament."—I heard no more—my senses forsook me.

Whilst my sufferings were at least suspended, the unfortunate Roquelaure's last moments drew nigh. After he had received the sacrament and given his last orders, he expired at two in the morning. His valet, the faithful executor of his dying injunctions, immediately came to deliver my sister's crucifix and my prayer book. My servants came in to look for me, and found me senseless in the balcony of my closet; they conveyed me to bed—I had lived in such perfect harmony with the husband whom heaven had given me, that the secret of my heart was utterly

unknown. My women, who had not the slightest suspicion of the matter, introduced Roquelaure's valet as soon as I had come to myself. I shrieked on perceiving the crucifix and the book in his hands. "Then he is no more!" I exclaimed. "No, madam," answered the valet, with tears. "I have lost the most virtuous and the best of masters; he expired pressing this crucifix to his heart, and while, by his command, I was reading aloud a prayer out of this book. Those two things he enjoined me to deliver to you after his death, with this letter." So saying, he laid them down upon a table beside my bed. I sent every body out of the room; then bathed in tears, I fell on my knees before this valued crucifix, and implored the Almighty to grant me the strength and resignation necessary to support such a shock—I then opened the letter which was fastened to the crucifix, and which was as follows:—

"This venerated sign of our faith will then have been the last consolation of two hearts possessed with an unfortunate passion!—Keep it as long as you live! O, angelic object of an attachment impassioned, but pure as my thoughts, which must have appeared so to you in all my actions: with what fascinations does your image in these my last moments present itself to my recollection! Religion commands me not to repel it. That mysterious and constant affection which was known to you alone, and which was never manifested but in the sacrifice of itself, reminds me of nought but virtuous conflicts and acts of generous self-denial! It is true you love me, you are free, and death snatches from me a legitimate felicity! But learn to know all the exaltation of my sentiments! Methinks earthly happiness would profane such love; it sprung up and was

nurtured in silence and in tears ; religion, in purifying, imparted to it all the elevation, all the sublime disinterestedness of the most heroic friendship—Ah ! what could I henceforth do, that should surpass or even equal what I have performed for you ? When fate has removed that sacred veil of mystery and love which covered our lives : when it shall be no longer possible for me to give you fresh proofs of a boundless devotion to your welfare, I have lived long enough, my destiny is accomplished—! You have enlarged my soul and opened my eyes—No ; a frail and vulgar happiness is not adapted to such noble sentiments ; an immortal felicity ought to crown this pure and celestial ardour. You have opened for me the gates of heaven ; thither I am going, to seek the due reward of faith and persevering virtue—there Supreme Justice will assign to me the pleasing task of blessing you to all eternity !—Adieu ; live to honour those invisible ties which have united and sanctified us ; live to preserve for me upon earth the only memorial of glory that I desire to leave behind me.”

I shall not attempt to describe my anguish, raised as it was to the highest pitch by this letter, which completely unfolded to me the sublime soul of the unfortunate Roquelaure. My only consolation was, to give vent to a sentiment so long repressed. I employed the most eminent artists in France to erect a magnificent monument to his memory. This mournful business engaged me for a whole year. At the end of that time, as the summer was just beginning, and I found myself more oppressed than ever with a regret and grief which I could not overcome, and which had already impaired my health, I determined to make a tour in Switzerland. I set out

taking with me the much-valued crucifix, the sacred depository of the last sentiments of two unfortunate hearts—that cross, upon which I shall also expire my last breath—I stopped at Geneva, and there lived in profound seclusion, seeing nobody but a celebrated physician whom I consulted without hope : for what could all the resources of his art avail against the malady under which I was sinking. This physician deeply interested me in the account which he gave of the virtuous Bishop of Geneva;* that saint, endued with such persuasive eloquence, and who, in the space of twelve years, had brought back into the bosom of the church more than seventy thousand souls !† He was just at this time visiting his diocese, performing his journey on foot, like the apostles, and accompanied by one single ecclesiastic, a relative of his. Most of the parishes of this diocese were situated in dreary deserts; he was obliged to climb almost inaccessible rocks, at the risk of being precipitated, if either feet or hands had slipped, into the most tremendous abysses; he was obliged to put up with a bed of straw, and often to be content with coarse bread and wild roots for his only fare. But nothing could cool the ardent charity of this zealous pastor, who according to his own expression, was determined that all the sheep belonging to his flock should hear his voice. He was daily expected at Geneva, and all classes were anxiously wishing for his return. As the physician recommended me to try the effect of a change of air, I removed to a small house, situated in a wild country, about ten miles from Geneva.

One morning, when I was walking in the fields as usual, I found myself so much depressed in bo-

* St. Francis de Sales.

† Historical

dy and mind, that I was unable to go on; I threw myself down on the trunk of a tree, and overpowered by the painful sensations to which I was a prey, I burst into tears—and raising my eyes towards heaven, I exclaimed:

“O thou, whom I loved and admired beyond measure, thou hast carried with thee to the tomb every sentiment of my heart! I can find nothing in the past but thy recollection alone! in the future I can only see a long and dismal night!—What is there now for me on this earth, where thou art no longer present! A stranger to every thing which surrounds me, I shall look with equal indifference and disdain on the vain pleasures of dissipation, the frivolous enjoyments of self-love, and the projects of ambition!—How shall I contemplate, without envy, the picture of felicity, the happy union of two feeling hearts!—in what conversation can I feel an interest! who can speak in congenial language to me, of generosity, of delicacy, of grandeur of soul, and especially of love!”—I shall be doomed to hear vulgar actions and ordinary friendships spoken of in terms of enthusiastic praise!—No, no; let me rather bury my life as well as my grief, in an eternal and profound solitude!”—Here my words were interrupted by my sighs; I heard a noise, and on casting my eyes towards the quarter from which it proceeded, all at once, at the distance of two hundred paces, I perceived a figure rise from the summit of a rock, of so venerable and majestic an appearance, that I instantly recognized, from the description which I had heard, the respectable Bishop of Geneva, whom in reality it was. He was clothed with a robe torn into several pieces, and tucked up above his knees: he carried on his shoulders a havresack, and a golden cross was suspended from his

neck. He was followed by a single priest, much younger than himself, but who was neither more agile, nor more robust—Carried away by an irresistible movement, I rose, and ran to precipitate myself at the feet of the holy bishop, exclaiming : “O, my father ! bless me, and cure me.”—He stopped me, and looking at me with affection, put several questions to me. I informed him who I was, and told him that I had lost every object of my affection ; that I was alone in the universe, and that I had not sufficient strength to support this dreadful state of isolation—At these words the bishop raised his head, and pointing to heaven ; “Ah, my child,” said he, “the Invisible and Supreme Comforter watches over you every instant !—It is in solitude and suffering that he in an especial manner holds communication with his children, with a more peculiar kindness—But I can conceive your sufferings ; I have mine also. Ten weeks ago I lost the best of mothers !—Return to Geneva ; I shall see you there, and we will weep together !” As he was uttering these words we saw several peasants approaching, who seemed seeking for him ; they were deputies from a neighbouring valley, who came to inform him that since his diocesan visit, rocks had fallen from the mountains, and destroyed several villages, and a great number of inhabitants ; that reduced by this calamity to the greatest wretchedness, and unable to pay the taxes, they could not, however, obtain an exemption from them ; and they beseeched him to send proper persons to the spot to verify the matter, that he might write in their favour.* The bishop offered to set off instantly, to convey to them all the assistance which was in his power. They informed

* Historical.

him, that since his visit, by the destruction of bridges, the tumbling of rocks, and by extensive inundations, the roads had been rendered impassable. "But," said the bishop, "do not you yourselves come from thence?"—"Yes, my lord," replied one of the deputies; "but we are poor people, accustomed from our infancy to such fatigues,"—"And I my children," said the bishop, "I am your father and obliged to provide myself for all your wants."* With these words which brought tears of joy and gratitude into the eyes of the deputies, this worthy pastor turning towards me, informed me that this incident would somewhat retard his return to Geneva, but that he would be there without fail in eight days. Then without losing a moment, he requested them to guide him, and immediately left me.

This interview procured me the first consolation I had tasted since my last misfortune—My heart felt a relief in the feeling of admiration: since the death of Roquelaure, I imagined this elevating sentiment was for ever lost to me.

I remained five or six days longer in my retreat, and then returned to Geneva: the bishop arrived there two days after me, and was received as an adored father. He proceeded through the city on foot in his apostolical robes: every one rushed out to see him, and pressed around him: they cut off pieces of his tattered garments, for the sake of preserving them as precious monuments of evangelical charity: they received his benedictions with tears, and in bestowing on him all the affecting names expressive of respect, filial love and gratitude: in this manner he was conducted

* Historical.

to the episcopal palace.*—He visited me according to his promise: I related to him my history; and I had the satisfaction of beholding this holy man weep along with me for the incomparable friend whom I had lost; and this, of all the homages which had been rendered to his memory, was undoubtedly the most glorious. The bishop next spoke to me of his own sufferings: "Conceive," said he, "the bitterness with which my soul was filled, when a mother, the most revered and cherished, would in her last moments receive assistance from me alone.† I was obliged to assume the firmness of a father of the church towards her whom it had always been such a pleasure for me to obey. I had to exhort her in the hour of death to whom I owed my own life. I spoke to her of courage when I felt my own give way. That I might not weaken her, I suppressed with difficulty and pain the tears to which she was entitled; and oppressed with grief, I was forced from time to time to escape into an adjoining chamber to give full vent to my tears in the bosom of God.‡ Yes, my child, these sufferings, accompanied by resignation, are lawful tributes, and we must pay them; but to sink under our sorrows is a guilty weakness, from which we ought to be preserved by confidence in prayer and by Christian charity. How many means religion offers us of surmounting them! For example," continued he, "I will propose to you to imitate Saint Mary, the *Consoler*,‡ who obtained this endearing surname, because, while yet young, rich, and beautiful, she consecrated her life entirely to the assistance of

* He was actually beloved with this enthusiasm.

† Historical.

‡ Who lived in the sixth century.

the poor, and the consolation of the afflicted. I have always thought that this amiable saint had herself experienced some great affliction, and that to withdraw her thoughts from it, she had recourse to this manner of dedicating herself to the unfortunate. Whenever she discovered any one labouring under violent anguish, she found means of introducing herself: she first wept with the afflicted, and having gained their friendship, she never quitted them: she afterwards, by ingenious exhortations, recalled them gently to reason, and took her leave only when she saw them completely consoled.*—When we are thus occupied with others (and religion alone can enable us,) we at last learn to forget ourselves, and all the wounds of the heart, which are empoisoned merely by the fatal care we take to preserve them, soon close and heal."

These conversations of the pious bishop raised my dejected soul; notwithstanding his extreme indulgence, and his angelic mildness, he inspired such respect and veneration, that one would have blushed to appear weak in his eyes.—Desirous of drawing me from my absolute retreat, he immediately proposed to take me into his family; "You will find there," said he, "neither gloom nor austerity; there are people," he added, "who imagine they are bestowing praise on the house of a person in active life, by saying it is a true cloister; that they live there as in a convent.—These exercises are good and holy; but we must consider circumstances, places, times, persons, and conditions; charity out of place is not charity; it is a tree transplanted into an improper soil."†

During the two years which I passed in Geneva

* All these details are to be found in the life of this saint.

† His own words. See his letters.

I found in the respectable family of the holy bishop every consolation which my situation required; I derived there the necessary strength for enabling me to support, without sinking under it, the regret of an irreparable loss, and recollections which nothing can ever efface from my heart. (6.)

Here ended the history of the countess de Brégi.

This heroic love, and the elevated character of the count de Roquelaure, made a lively impression on Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and completely confirmed her in the resolution of never bestowing her heart and her hand on a man of ordinary talents.

As soon as the delay which Mademoiselle de La Fayette had demanded before returning to court was expired, she went and resumed her service: to her great joy she found on her return a friend of her infancy and of her early youth: this was the marchioness de Beaumont, who had been educated along with her in the female convent, Sainte-Marie, in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, till the age of thirteen, when Mademoiselle de La Fayette having quitted the convent to go to her aunt's, they separated without ever seeing one another afterwards. But those first ties, of which the remembrance is always so delightful, are easily renewed: these two persons were transported at meeting again; they had the same principles, the same sentiments, with different characters, especially to appearance. The marchioness de Beaumont was twenty-five: she became a widow at seventeen, after two years marriage, and was without fortune, her only subsistence being her situation about the queen's person: she had been six years at court. With an engag-

ing and agreeable figure, she possessed a mind which was naturally observing, but the penetration of which was concealed by her gaiety : she was allowed to possess the talent of ridiculing, but not that of judging characters, and discerning the motives and intentions : her frankness was taken for rashness ; but though she was incapable of committing a crime, she was equally incapable of committing an act of imprudence : she pleased universally, because nothing succeeds better at court than what is truly natural (as nature generally appears there under some constraint,) and the light and heedless air, which can alone calm an infinity of alarms and suspicions. In short, she possessed that sort of very useful consideration which a certain turn of mind, epigrammatical without bitterness, and lively without extravagance, always gives. The dread of a witty and biting repartee is in the world the most infallible restraint upon impertinence and malice.

In the evening Mademoiselle de La Fayette repaired to the limited circle of the queen : the conversation was there carried on with equal entertainment and freedom. Mademoiselle de La Fayette obtained every suffrage ; she pleased the queen in a particular manner : the men were all sincere in their admiration ; and all the women shewed that species of kindness towards her, which is naturally inspired by self-love itself for those individuals whose career commences with success. Besides, when nothing has yet been prepared of the nature of opposition, the resolution is taken of yielding with a good grace. It is known that with a little time it will be always easy to retract all the praise inconsiderately bestowed in the first mo-

ments. On leaving the queen, the two friends went and shut themselves in together, for the purpose of passing the night in each other's company without interruption. The marchioness de Beaumont began by drawing several portraits, somewhat satirically, but with great fidelity. "The dutchess of Chevreuse," said she, "is the heroine of intriguers ; for she does not love intrigue from cupidity, nor even from ambition, but from a pure and disinterested love for agitation, bustle, and the events which she gives rise to—in short, for intrigue itself. What pleases her the most is not the success of an undertaking, but the pleasure of engaging in a mysterious affair, and conducting it with ability ; the glory of inventing all the springs of a very complicated machine, and communicating to them a rapid and continual motion. Hence she was more brilliant, and decidedly happier in disgrace and exile, than she is here, because she was then intriguing for her return ; but now that she is in her country, and thoroughly restored to favour, she languishes and droops : the vigilance of cardinal de Richelieu renders all her intrigues fruitless ; conspiracies are exhausted, and there is now nothing in this way to do, either on a grand scale or in a minor department ; and all intriguers, except those of the cardinal's party, are thrown into consternation, disconcerted, and discouraged, and plunged in an overwhelming apathy... Nothing is to be dreaded here but *espionnage*." "What !" said Mademoiselle de La Fayette, "in the society of the queen?"—"That is precisely the place where it is most active." "But how does the queen suffer spies in her private circle?" "They belong to the court : they are known,

and that is something. Were they to be expelled the cardinal would gain over others, of whom we should long remain the dupes. It is for our own interest to preserve the present ones."—"But who are then those unworthy creatures?"—"In the first place Chavigny, who has always been sold to ministry."—"I recollect having heard this."—"We frequently amuse ourselves in deceiving him : when we wish certain things to be communicated to the king or the cardinal which we are afraid of telling them, we appear to utter them unawares before him : I am almost always charged with this sort of part, which I act to admiration ; for there is an infinite pleasure in duping an informer ; but it frequently happens also, that things which are really imprudent escape from us in his presence during the heat of conversation, and the cardinal is sure to be informed of them next day." "And the other spies?"—"The viscount de ***."...."The viscount de ***!....His manners are so noble!"....—"Hence espionnage is but a trade for Chavigny, but it is an art for the viscount de ***. Chavigny relates clumsily to the cardinal whatever he hears ; but the viscount de *** falls upon quite a different plan : he never reports a positive phrase ; every thing is vague in his informations : this is *the dignity* of the thing....But he gives pretty clearly to understand that such a person is not an admirer of the cardinal, or censures him ; that another is his enemy : all this is told with delicacy, and not under the guise of odious reports : they are traits which *accidentally* escape from him through his attachment for the cardinal.... they are admirably understood and profited by, and serve to produce hatred and re-

venge—and the viscount de *** receives honours, places, and pensions.”—“What a place this is !” “It requires a long residence and study to know it thoroughly : knowledge of the world is not sufficient here.—Every thing vicious and ridiculous is softened, refined, and veiled at court : the natural tone and manners is in general more imperfect in it than in the circles of Paris : but in return, affectation is less marked, falsehood more suspicious of itself, and fearful of more experienced and more interested observers ; hypocrisy and flattery never appear here under a vulgar form ; imbecility and folly appear only by stealth, and with such delicate features that it requires very nice eyes to discover them. For example, this viscount de ***, of whom we were speaking just now, when out of his disguise at Paris, is an ostentatious fool : his object there is to induce people to believe that he possesses credit, and is beloved by the cardinal : but here the object is to persuade the world that he has no pretensions, and that he is only guided by honourable views, by sentiments of glory and attachment ; hence the viscount de ***, under another tone, another appearance, and another language, is no longer distinguishable.” — “It must be owned that all this shows a good taste in the dissimulation.”—And this good taste gives rise at court to actions and proceedings externally praise-worthy, which we seldom witness elsewhere.—Propriety is so nobly managed, that it assumes the appearance of virtue.—No one here endeavours to supplant a friend ; for treachery of this nature would be dishonourable, and dishonour is dreaded as an invincible obstacle to fortune.—The chagrin for the disgrace of a minister for whom

A great attachment has been professed, is not only not attempted to be concealed, but even studiously published : he is not abandoned in the first moments of his misfortune ; but then the attentions to be shewn him have in this case their limited time, after which it is allowable to neglect and forget him, like the mournings which we wear without affliction, and at the end of which, throwing aside the appearance of affliction, we cease any longer to constrain ourselves. But these forms are becoming : they prevent low and shocking actions ; they give an estimable appearance to manners, and they preserve alive ideas of a noble and just nature. It is quite natural that in the place where the greatest desire, and the greatest interest to succeed should be united, the exterior should also be the most seductive, and all the means of releasing and interesting better calculated than elsewhere.— Yes, if every thing which we see and hear in this place of an amiable and praise-worthy nature were produced by sincere sentiments, this would be the golden age, and the age of civilization.”

This conversation was prolonged through the greatest part of the night ; the break of day at last forced the two friends to separate.

An accident happened next day which diffused a just indignation through the little court of the queen. We have already mentioned that the queen had built and founded the female monastery of Val-de-Grace : she frequently shut herself up there without any followers, and passed several days in it : these pious retreats were rendered suspected to the king, whom they persuaded that the queen merely withdrew to this convent for the purpose of writing in full freedom

to her brother, the king of Spain.* It was supposed that all the letters of that prince were there deposited and the king gave orders to the archbishop of Paris and the chancellor Seguire, to visit the convent, and especially the queen's apartment. On entering the house, the archbishop prohibited the nuns, under the pain of excommunication, from speaking to one another; all the keys were demanded, they searched every cell and the apartment of the queen with the most minute care: a box, of which the queen had the key, was forced open, and nothing was found in it but penitential robes, girdles armed with iron points, disciplines, sackcloths, and prayer-books.† This produced the greatest confusion among the queen's informers. The singular disclosure only served to publish the piety of that princess, a piety the more touching, as she had hitherto carefully concealed its austerity. This triumph of the queen caused the greatest embarrassment to the king, and it produced on him the usual effect of rendering him less accessible and more savage than usual. The adventure, in exciting the indignation of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, increased her aversion for the king, whom she had not yet discovered, though she had been several days at court. As she was expressing one day to Madame de Beaumont her sentiments on this subject, "Well," said the marchioness, "when you shall have seen him, you will not speak in this manner."—"I shall always think as I now do."—"First, he is very handsome."—"So it is said; but what does that signify with such a character?" "An interesting paleness, beautiful brown

* Historical.—There was then a war with Spain.

† Historical.—Memories de Madame de Motteville.

hair, naturally curled, regular features, a melancholy air, an elegant and noble shape, in short the figure of a hero of a romance *." " This hero will never be mine ; a bad son, a bad husband, an indolent king."—" He has great abilities (*beaucoup d'Esprit*) †."—" He is the more to be condemned."—" Those who are near him say he is feeling." " He has abandoned all his friends." " It was proved to him that they betrayed him." " It would seem that the friendship of a sovereign imprints on the person who is honoured with it an august and sacred character, which ought, in every supposition, to preserve him from an ignominious death : hence Henry the Great has been reproached for allowing him whom he loved so much and whose life he had saved in battle to perish on the scaffold. Yet no subject was ever more guilty than the *marechal de Biron* ; the king told him that he knew all, that he possessed proofs of his crime (which was the truth,) that he merely wished for a sincere avowal, and that he would then pardon every thing ; *Biron* persisted in denying, and the king gave him up to justice ; yet all Europe nevertheless were of opinion that this great king, from respect for an old friendship so intimate and so tender, ought after the sentence to have pardoned him and saved him from the scaffold. How then can we excuse the abandonment and death of *Chalais* ‡?" " *Chalais* was rather the favourite of *monsieur* than of the king." " In short, you love the king ?" " He is

* See *Memories de Madame de Moteville*.

† All the memoirs agree in this

‡ And still less that of the *grand ecuyer cinq Mars* ; but the punishment of the latter did not take place till long afterwards, and a year before the death of the king.

handsome, witty and brave ; would you have a woman not to take an interest in him. Besides, he has great virtues, his morals are perfectly pure, and he possesses a great fund of justice." "A weak and indolent king cannot be just.—A sincere piety—very ill understood ; I own that I have no great faith in that piety which does not produce the virtues which belong to the situation of the individual." "He has been in love, and his love was of the most pure description, or rather, it was a tender and perfect friendship." "For Mademoiselle de Hautefort ? But if he had loved her, she would have reformed his character ; she would have elevated his soul." "She did not take the trouble." "Why then did she receive his confidence ?" "To make her court to the queen, to boast of it, to laugh at him." "That is shocking : poor prince ! He is indeed unfortunate." "Should he happen to entertain for you the same sentiment which he had for Mademoiselle de Hautefort ?" "What an idea ! What folly !" "Why ? you are so beautiful, and have so sage an appearance !—I know that yesterday evening on his retiring to bed he spoke a great deal of you." "Well, what said he ?"—"Ask the commander de Jars—The king, notwithstanding his habitual indolence, asked a thousand questions concerning you ; the commander extolled your wit, the count de Soissons praised your beauty, the count de la Meilleraye spoke in high terms of your gentleness, your modesty, your behaviour, and the king drew the conclusion that you were a person equally charming and faultless. You may rest assured that he will remark you ; in the mean time you have already made a brilliant conquest." "How ?" "That of the count de Soissons, who is already desperately in

love with you." "I do not believe it; but such a love would be extremely offensive to me; an alliance with a princess can alone become a man of his birth and rank; his ambition is well known, and his morals are neither pure nor decent." "This is very true; but he possesses a lively head, grandeur of soul, and he is very susceptible of the elevated and exalted—with all this he may be carried a great way by love; and where, pray, would be the folly of feeling an enthusiasm for a female of an illustrious birth, equally beautiful, witty, and virtuous? Your heart is free; if I were in your situation, I would subjugate and enchain him, and I would become countess de Soissons." "But, my dear friend, you are become quite extravagant this evening." "Not at all; I am speaking very reasonably. When I reflect on all your perfections; when I see the extraordinary sensation which you produce here, I feel for you an ambition beyond bounds." "And have you none yourself?" "Yes, I might perhaps possess some, but then it should be of a common sort. What I am proposing to you is certainly of a sufficiently noble nature." "I do not think so; to seduce a light headed man, whose conduct cannot be held in such estimation, to lead him to form an ill-suited connexion, to take advantage of his passion without sharing it, is a triumph which an artful coquette might perhaps obtain, but which does not tempt me.—My heart requires an elevated sentiment and my ambition the most exalted aim." "You are hard to please; but if the count de Soissons should be fortunate enough to please you, you would find him amiable; were he to gain this noble and proud heart?" "Then I should only have his glory in view; my ambition would be limited to him, and I should not marry him." At

these words the marchioness was warmly affected, and seizing one of the hands of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, she pressed it in her own.—“ I can conceive this last sentiment,” she said, with a sigh, “ and when you shall learn my story, you will see that I also am capable of sacrificing myself for the man I love.” Mademoiselle de la Fayette was eager to learn this story, but it was too late to begin the recital. “ Besides,” added Madame de Beaumont, “ our quarter’s service with the queen will be finished in fifteen days, when we shall have a whole week’s liberty, and as we can then dispose of our leisure at our pleasure, I shall satisfy your curiosity.”

Two days after this conversation Mademoiselle de la Fayette, with the queen’s permission, went to Paris under the guidance of Mademoiselle de Guise, to join the charitable Ladies, and accompany them in one of their visits to the *Hotel-Dieu*. This pious association, composed of the most distinguished ladies of the court and city, and under the direction of Saint-Vincent, went to that hospital with religious consolations and refreshments for the patients, and to form by their example the young grey-sisters (*Sœurs grises*,) newly instituted for the purpose of managing and tending the patients. These ladies, a great number of whom were very young, hired a chamber near the hospital for the preparing of linen and making broths, and necessary refreshments for the patients. In this chamber they established girls taken in from charity, to perform all these offices.* Every morning five ladies of the association distributed broths and meats to the patients : and in the afternoon, attended by the grey-sisters, they returned with fruits and pastry* ; and it is thus

* Historical.—Vic de Saint Vincent by Abbelli Bishop of Rhodes.

that christian charity alone joins with the solidity of benevolence all the charm and the grace of the most delicate and exquisite attention.

Mademoiselle de Guise and Mademoiselle de la Fayette, named to fill these sublime functions, repaired with three other ladies to the *Hotel-Dieu*: there Mademoiselle de la Fayette, as well as her companions, tucked up her sleeves, put on above her morning dress, a large apron of white linen, and took up a basket full of fruit.* This dress which announced actions of so touching a nature, gave an additional charm to the figure of every one of the ladies; but it particularly embellished Mademoiselle de la Fayette, whose arms and hands were singularly beautiful. In this dress, she ran through all the halls with her companions, distributing refreshments, and speaking to the patients with the most tender affection. As they were in the middle of the last hall, they heard a rumour significative of some event, and immediately people came running towards them with the information that the king was coming to visit the hospital, and that he would immediately make his appearance. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who had never yet seen him, expected him with a curiosity which occasioned a sort of emotion. Immediately the folding doors opened, and the king was announced. He was followed only by the duke de Bellegarde, the marquis de Souvré, and the count de la Meilleraye. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who was behind Mademoiselle de Guise, advanced precipitately to see him, but her eyes encountering at the same moment those of the king, she retired blushing. However, she observed that he whispered something to the count de la Meille-

* Such was in reality the costume of those ladies.

raye ; she conjectured that he was asking him a question, and that she herself was the object of the question ; for the modesty of a woman, however perfect it may be, never prevents her from remarking any thing in her favour. She found the king's exterior such as it had been painted by Madame de Beaumout ; she even thought that it was impossible to convey any idea of the mildness and touching charm of his look and his physiognomy. The king advanced : he first spoke to Mademoiselle de Guise, and then to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, designating her by her name. He spoke in the most obliging and gracious terms to her of the action which she was employed in, and turning towards the other ladies. he made a general application of this eulogy. He went through all the halls. The ladies who were entitled to do the honours of the place followed him every where ; he frequently spoke to them, and examined every thing with evident interest. This unexpected visit diffused a universal joy throughout the hospital, and seemed to give new strength to all the patients. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, having witnessed the effect produced by the king's presence, was very much affected by it ; more than once her eyes were filled with tears. The king on taking his leave left a considerable sum, with orders to place it at the disposal of the holy founder of this pious establishment.

When the king was seated in his carriage, he spoke to the count de la Meilleraye of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, with a warmth he seldom displayed. She had in reality produced the most profound impression on his heart, and left an inextinguishable recollection in his imagination. How could he forget this first interview, having seen this beautiful and brilliant figure under the

angelic form of compassionate and beneficent piety, and the most touching goodness!—Louis at last decided on leaving his solitude, and that very evening he appeared in the queen's circle. On entering, his eyes sought Mademoiselle de la Fayette: her mourning, and the extreme simplicity of her dress, destitute of every species of ornament, might have sufficed to distinguish her at the very first glance in the midst of a circle of women dressed with the richest stuffs, and loaded with diamonds. The queen called Mademoiselle de la Fayette to her, to present her to the king, who said obligingly with a smile, that she had already *presented* herself in the morning, in the most interesting manner. He spoke of the *Hotel-Dieu*, and extolled with warmth the piety of the charitable ladies. After this general conversation, he approached Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and spoke to her for more than half an hour of the countess de Brégy, whose virtue he extolled; and of the countess's sister, whom he called a heroine. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, hearing the praise of persons whose memory she revered and cherished, replied with an expression of gratitude and sensibility: she completely captivated Louis, who not daring to prolong this conversation much more, separated from her, sighing: but he remained all the evening, a thing which he never used to do; he spoke to all the women with a mildness and winningness of manner which were remarked; for in a circle we are never so amiable with every person as when we have a passionate desire of pleasing only one. The most flattering and intoxicating praise is that which we receive universally before the beloved object.

The king returned next day to the queen's circle: there he appeared still more amiable than

the day before, and to be occupied in an especial manner with Mademoiselle de la Fayette. Every mind was at that time agitated with political events ; the Spaniards were making a fearful progress in France ; they had effected a descent in Provence, and information had just come from another quarter that they had taken Corbie Picardy. Louis announced to the council in the morning that he was on the point of setting off without delay to put himself at the head of his troops to repulse the Spaniards. Men and money were wanting ; the situation of France was so alarming, that the genius of Richelieu was alarmed, and for a moment he had even thoughts of withdrawing from affairs ; but the cardinal de Valette animated his courage and his hopes, and for the glory of France, this great minister continued to retain the sovereign authority.*

Louis, on the eve of his departure for the army, in so critical a moment, had every eye fixed on him, and excited a general interest ; they called to mind the brilliant courage he had already shown in war, and particularly at the siege of Royan in Saintonge, where he four times mounted the parapet to reconnoitre the place with the evident danger of his life ;* they still recollected the valour of which he had at the same time given the most distinguished testimony in Poitou, when, at the head of his guards, he passed at midnight into the isle of Rhé, and drove Sompse from it, after defeating the troops which defended that important post*. Mademoiselle de la Fayette heard all these anecdotes, and many others of the same nature, repeated the whole day through. She saw only in Louis an interesting hero. She forgot

* Historical.

his weaknesses and his injustice : she thought only of his courage, his amiable qualities, and the dangers to which he was to be exposed ; the air of the king, always melancholy, but serene, and his calm behaviour, added to the interest she felt for him in secret. The king publicly announced that he would set out as soon as the levy of twenty thousand men made at Paris by his orders should be completed ; he said that it should be almost entirely composed of servants and apprentices *, and he added that this little army would not be worse for it, because every Frenchman upon occasion becomes an excellent soldier.

The queen and nearly all the ladies being engaged at play, the king sat down beside Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who was not playing, and he conversed a long time with her. Mademoiselle de la Fayette spoke in general of the melancholy which a departure for war occasions to those who remain behind. "Happy are they," said the king, "who are personally regretted!—They have an additional motive for loving glory: they ought to pursue it with ardour when it can honour the object of their love!—But when we are not loved, courage is without merit, and without recompense."—These words produced a strong impression on Mademoiselle de la Fayette ; the king remarked it, he looked at her steadily, and after a moment's silence began again. "I hope," said he, in a low voice, "that we shall resume this conversation—I earnestly desire it." With these words he withdrew without waiting an answer. Mademoiselle de la Fayette fixed her eyes upon him with emotion, and she was thoughtful and absent during the remainder of the evening.

* Which was the case.

When she was alone with the Marchioness de Beaumont, the latter said, "Every body is of opinion that the king is in love with you, but in his own way," continued she, "a chaste and timid love, to which even in thought he will never give that profane name. The count de la Meilleraye asserts that he has *all the symptoms of an extreme passion* for you, and that he had not any such for Mademoiselle de Hautefort, whom he loved but feebly." "I do not know the king," answered Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "but I own that I have lost many of my prejudices against him, because I think I can discover that he has never been correctly appreciated. His principles are too austere to allow him to yield to a criminal passion; he is capable of friendship, and it is necessary for him to open his heart; his confidence has been abused: perhaps he seeks for truth, perhaps he is worthy of hearing it; if he asks me the truth, I shall not dissemble it." "I am very certain of that; and if you could give him courage to reign by himself, and to shake off the yoke of the cardinal, what a service you would render to France!"—"We are speaking of chimeras: the king will not consult me, nor require the truth from me; besides he is going to set out." "Very well, he will find you on his return." "Let us drop this folly—but let us pity this brave, feeling, and able prince, who fills his station so ill. It is evident that he feels, that he suffers, and that he is unhappy!—If he had a real friend, he might have been a worthy successor to Henry IV. This is a distressing reflection!" "Let us hope, however: he is yet very young!"—"It is said he spoke this morning with much firmness to the deputies of parliament, who refused to register the edicts for the sums necessary to carry on the

war.—“Yes, the money which I demand,” said he to them, “is neither for play nor extravagant expences; it is not for myself that I demand it, but for the interest and glory of the nation. Those who oppose my wishes in this, do more harm to me than the Spaniards; but I shall find means of enforcing obedience.*” “It must be owned there is energy in that discourse.—Ah! I am persuaded that he is not known.”

The following days the king regularly visited at the queen's, and appeared always equally occupied with Mademoiselle de la Fayette; but his timidity would not permit him to converse long with her at a time, for he perceived that he was anxiously observed. On the day before his departure for the army, he went in the morning to the queen, and on leaving that princess, he stopped in the closet where the maids of honour were; he approached Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who, with one of her companions, was in the recess of a window, and the companion having withdrawn, the king took her place, and ordered Mademoiselle de la Fayette to sit down beside him. Mademoiselle de la Fayette being at a great distance from her companions, and as it were tête-à-tête with the king, recollected with extreme emotion that it was in this manner he conversed with Mademoiselle de Hautefort during his intimacy with her.—“I come” said the king to her with a low and trembling voice, “I come to bid you adieu.” At these words, Mademoiselle de la Fayette bowed, without possessing sufficient strength to answer: she looked down, and Louis felt a keen emotion on observing tears steal down her

* Historical. The parliament ended by registering almost every edict.

cheeks.—“I have had,” he continued, “but few moments of happiness in my life, but this is one.”—To these words, pronounced in a still lower voice, and with greater agitation, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, equally embarrassed and affected, returned for answer, that every French heart would express the sentiment which she felt, if the king should deign to inquire. “No, Mademoiselle,” replied Louis, “I wish only to speak to your’s.—And if I there find the friendship which I have hitherto sought in vain, my entire confidence will be the price.—Perhaps, on knowing my character, my situation, and my misfortunes, you will approve of many things which I have been forced to do, and for which I have been very unjustly blamed. But I set out to-morrow: I carry a pleasing idea along with me.—Preserve that touching sensibility for me;—if heaven permit me to return, it will be my consolation”.—This conversation was interrupted by the dutchess de Chevreuse, who, issuing out of the queen’s apartment, crossed the closet. The king who had risen on hearing the door open, advanced towards the dutchess, and spoke to her with embarrassment. The dutchess seized this moment of discomposure to ask a favour. This solicitation, which removed every idea of what had been passing, freed the king from his embarrassment; and, through gratitude, he instantly granted, with the very best grace, what the dutchess demanded. On his departure the dutchess, laughing, sat down beside Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who had recommenced, with an air of great application, her labours on a small work of tapestry. With a smile, she asked the dutchess the cause of her gaiety. “It is,” answered the dutchess, “because I have just displayed an admirable presence

of mind ; and as you are commencing your career at court, I shall relate this trait for your instruction. The king, without hating me, is not fond of me ; and he is somewhat in dread of my inconsiderate character and satirical humour. Hence, of all those who might happen to interrupt his conversation with you, I am exactly the person who would give him the greatest displeasure. He advanced towards me with a disconcerted air. I instantly felt the advantage which might be drawn from this favourable occasion. I know that people are always obliging when they are afraid, especially in the first agitation.—I instantly demanded a very important favour for myself ; and, as I foresaw, he did not hesitate a moment in granting it. I shall be grateful for it, and shall not relate this little adventure to any person ; but you must agree with me that this is admirable.” Mademoiselle de la Fayette agreed in nothing : she even feigned not to comprehend any thing of what the dutchess had said ; and she endeavoured to give the most simple turn to the marked preference which the king had displayed for her. The dutchess rallied her on her reserve and her prudence : “ On the king’s return,” said she, “ we will resume this conversation. I shall give you good advice ; and if you will follow my counsel, in less than six months you will turn the whole court upside down, and it has great need of an entire regeneration. It is in an astonishing state of apathy ; nothing goes on ; every spring is paralysed ; we must give it new motion and life ; and nothing is so easy if you will only exactly follow the plan which I shall chalk out for you.” Mademoiselle de la Fayette took this very serious discourse of the dutchess de Cherveuse for a mere piece of pleasantry.

As soon as Mademoiselle de la Fayette was disentangled from this conversation, she invented a pretext for retiring; and she went and shut herself up for the purpose of reflecting by herself without constraint on the last adieu of the king. The king had at last explained himself clearly; he wanted a friend; he had announced his choice, and promised *an entire confidence*. His religious principles were so well known, that his intimacy with Mademoiselle de Hautefort had not given rise to the smallest slander. It would therefore be a ridiculous prudery to repulse his friendship, and even a sort of indecency to suppose him to be influenced by other sentiments than those which he displayed with so much candour and simplicity. In short, he affirmed that neither his character nor the motives of his conduct were known. How much she was disposed to believe so! with what sincerity she abjured all the prejudices which she had against him!—The object which pleases and is found amiable, and by which we believe ourselves loved, possesses all the most powerful means of persuasion, Mademoiselle de la Fayette could not be deceived with respect to the extreme indolence of Louis; but then she could urge such powerful reasons to induce him to get the better of it. The vanquishing this difficulty did not depress her imagination. Women love nothing so much as a field for the exercise of their creative talents; to correct, improve, and inspire, is to act, govern, and reign—the only glorious and legitimate empire which nature has granted to woman, and which the laws cannot take from them. With what virtuous liberty and energy Mademoiselle de la Fayette resolved to speak to the king when he should open his heart to her! Undoubtedly he was not so weak at bottom as he was stated to be;

for had not he spoken to the Parliament with the greatest firmness? and had not he displayed a great deal also in continuing the war with vigour, and setting off to put himself at the head of his troops? With his talents, his sensibility, and good advice, why should he not equal his father in renown? why not even surpass him? Friendship would inspire him with his activity and his constancy in laborious and difficult operations. He possessed his courage and his intellect; and he had an advantage over Henry IV. in the possession of morals of the most perfect purity. In short, if it was flattering to obtain the esteem and confidence of a hero, it was still more so to form one worthy of the admiration of the universe.

These seductive ideas floated still somewhat vaguely in the head of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; but they were germinating there, and could not fail soon to develop themselves, and to carry her sentiments and her hopes to the highest pitch of enthusiasm.

The king took his departure at the dawning of the following day, followed by nearly the whole of his courtiers of every age. After his departure, for several days many women were seen to display all the exaggeration of affliction for just subjects of alarm, while others betrayed, in spite of all their efforts, the secret griefs which they ought to have concealed. This affection on the one hand, and constraint on the other, diffused throughout the court the most gloomy sadness and ennui. At last, however, it was allowed that they ought to attempt to get over it; and without owning that it was possible for them to be amused, they immediately pursued every amusement with their accustomed ardour.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette took advantage of

some days of liberty to go to Vincennes to the country-house which her aunt had left her. She took the Marchioness de Beaumont along with her; and one evening, when they were alone together; she put her in mind of the promise which she had given, of relating the principal events of her life. "I consent," said the Marchioness; "but I am going to reveal the most important of all my secrets to you—a secret which honour and love prescribe the concealment of, especially to the object the most interesting to us. You must therefore give me your word never to reveal it." Mademoiselle de la Fayette gave the promise which her friend exacted, and the marchioness related her story in the following terms :

HISTORY

OF THE

MARCHIONESS DE BEAUMONT.

MARRIED, at fifteen and a few months, to a man of fifty, I was happy in being allied to a rich, worthy, and amiable husband, possessed of an excellent character. I left the convent with all the innocence of a boarder, utterly ignorant of the world, and unacquainted with theatres : and whose only idea of dissipation was taken from the recreations of the convent. I regretted the good nuns and my companions ; but, to tell you the truth, I soon forgot my grief in the joy of receiving fine clothes and an elegant *corbeille*, and the pleasure of making an infinity of small presents to my female friends. Having never worn any thing but our common black convent-dress, with a suitable mantle and head dress, I was a good deal astonished to see myself, in a mirror, equip-

ped in a rich dress covered with silver and jewels. The day after the marriage I was conducted to an estate in Burgundy, seventy leagues from Paris. We arrived about mid day ; they were in readiness to receive us. We were met by a cavalcade of peasants, many of whom carried fusils and old carabines loaded with powder, which they fired off in the air in honour of us. I paraded through our village with all the pride of a conqueror who enters an enemy's town in triumph. All the inhabitants were at their doors, and vied with one another in crying *Success to our good lord and our young lady !* My sentiments of vain glory were softened by a keen feeling of a different description, and I could not refrain from tears. In this happy disposition, I admired prodigiously the majesty of our avenue of old elms, three times longer and broader than the beautiful alley of the garden of my convent. The aspect of our ancient castle and its towers was equally a subject of admiration ; and my astonishment was at its height when all the young village-maidens, dressed in white, came to offer me flowers, and the old women cakes, small cheeses, and eggs. The education which we receive is well calculated for our happiness ; the solitude of a convent, the complete ignorance of the factitious pleasures of the great world, prepare us for the purest and sweetest enjoyments, especially in the class of the nobility, whose wives, when not attached to the court, are destined to pass the greatest part of their lives on their estates.

The day after my arrival in Burgundy was still a day of enchantment for me. I took possession of the vast apartment of Lady of the Castle. I received the homage of the venerable steward, who spoke to me with delight of the late mar-

chioness, my mother-in-law: he appeared so old, that it seemed to me he could have spoken something respecting all the ancestors of the family: he presented all the principal domestics to me. I was proud to think I was about to reign with sovereign authority over so many people. I ran over every part of the house and offices, the kitchen-gardens, and the park, of which the splendid rows of beeches towered up to the clouds. I saw that it would require at least eight days to enable me to get acquainted with my new empire. I received the visit of the clergyman whom I had already seen in the morning in his mansion-house, and afterwards in the church, where I was received with pomp. In the evening the good pastor came to give his benediction to my chamber,* and at nine o'clock I repaired to the family gallery, where I was presented with a prayer-book, in which I was to read prayers aloud to the whole house assembled together †. On the following days I visited our neighbours, who received me with the most friendly cordiality. In all these excursions I felt an increase of esteem and affection for M. de Beaumont on seeing how much he was cherished and revered by his domestics and vassals, and the consideration, and friendship which his neighbours possessed for him. In this manner I passed two years, the recollection of which will always be dear to me. At the end of this period we set out for Paris: and M. de Beaumont obtained for me a place about the queen's person. I arrived at court at

* A ceremony which always took place in those times on the day of the arrival of the Lady of a Castle, newly married, or on the following day.

† A custom which was still regularly kept up in castles, and even in country-houses, about the middle of the last century.

the age of seventeen ; but with an enlightened guide, whom I loved and whom I revered. I brought with me to this place, where every thing was to appear so new to me, an excessive timidity, which for a long time induced me to preserve a profound silence, a mind very indifferently cultivated, but possessing correct ideas of rectitude, and a simplicity of taste, which the refined amusements of the great world have never deprived me of. Notwithstanding my youth assisted by the sage reflections of M. de Beaumont, I formed much more correct judgements at that time than an infinity of persons possessed of great experience, because they were blinded by their pretensions and by coquetry : whereas I observed every thing with a calm curiosity, and, without passions or illusions, easily discerned the path, because whatever was false struck me as low and vulgar. Rectitude and simplicity, with a little natural talent, impart a discernment which we have little reason to distrust, and which is surprising when we enter the world at my then age ; for at that period the taste is less refined, but the instinct much more to be relied on. All my first impressions were correct ; all those who displeased me at first sight were at bottom either vicious or ridiculous.—In the end I have learned to reflect with more acuteness ; but I have never passed sound judgments.

I had been eight months at court, when I was obliged to leave it for a year in consequence of an event equally unforeseen and disastrous : M. de Beaumont was suddenly attacked by a defluxion in the chest, and fell a victim on the fifth day*** I lost the dearest and most respectable friend. I remained without children, guide, or fortune—and I was not eighteen. The queen permitted

me to pass a year in retirement. The countess de ***, sister and successor to M. de Beaumont, conducted me to an estate in Burgundy which she inherited. I experienced the most painful sensations on finding myself in this chateau, where I was nothing now but a stranger. The good peasants received me with a sensibility which affected me so much the more, as these effusions of their love were quite disinterested, and as they were in a high degree honourable to the memory of their virtuous lord; but in general it seems that gratitude, in all its purity, has taken refuge with this interesting class, and I am persuaded that their very dependence adds to that gratitude from which so many other virtues have their origin. The authority which is not abused inspires a degree of veneration which exalts every sentiment. What would filial piety be without respect! and I am persuaded, if ever the peasantry should cease to be vassals of the proprietors of land, whatever benefit they might receive from the latter, far from loving them, they would merely envy them their wealth, and they would become insolent and ungrateful.

The first weeks I passed in this castle were extremely painful to me; but at length the caresses, the care, and the affectionate proceedings of the countess, gradually weakened these distressing sensations. The countess de *** possesses virtues, but her character is imperious, and she only loves truly those whom she governs. Her friendship secures an active protection and at the same time it always produces an entire dependence. The countess was only acquainted with my gentleness: she had seen me yield a uniform submission to her brother; and without reflecting on the motive of that just obedience, she imagin-

ed that I should be equally submissive to all her wishes. She found it perfect in all the little concerns of society ; and for five months we lived together in an intimacy altogether undisturbed by any thing unpleasant. The interest which she took in my prosperity induced her to endeavour to make my fortune ; and she thought of remarrying me to the baron d'Urbain, a distant relation of her husband, of the age of thirty-eight, whose only merit was his immense wealth, acquired by unexpected successions. The new possessor of this fortune, his only heirs, were collateral relations whom he did not love. The countess, who had invited him to her chateau, directed his choice to me ; but as she saw me sincerely afflicted she agreed with the baron that she should not speak to me of these sentiments till the expiration of my mourning. In the mean while, he took every opportunity of rendering himself agreeable to me ; and the countess never let slip any occasion of praising his goodness and the excellence of his character. Notwithstanding all these endeavours, I was much less struck with his moral qualities than with his disagreeable manners and his absolute want of intellect. I discovered the deessing of the countess. I had no disire of seconding them ; but that might retard a most disagreeable explanation, I feigned not to have the smallest suspicion of them.

I had been ten months in Burgundy when a new neighbour arrived whom I was unacquainted with. The count de Melcy purchased a superb estate two leagues from ours. He was of the age of fifty-two, very rich, very ambitious, a miser in his disposition, but pompous through vanity : and he had an only son of the age of twenty, the Saint-Ibal, whom you now see at-

tached to the count de Soissons.—He paid my sister-in-law a visit, accompanied by his son ; and she received him as an old friend. Saint-Ibal, who had not yet been presented at court, did not then possess that vivacity and brilliancy for which he is now so remarkable ; but the timidity which is so becoming in youth, eyes full of fire, a look which expressed all that his tongue failed to utter, gave him other graces by no means less seductive. In this first visit, I clearly saw that he remarked the pretensions of the baron d'Urbin to me, and the protection which he received from the countess, and that he held them in derision. I saw still more clearly the impression which I made on his heart.—He contrived to show this in a thousand different ways, but with such admirable ingenuity that not one of the society had the smallest suspicion of it. These observations, which I made with extreme emotion, were not without danger for me —A sentiment absolutely new to me began all of a sudden to disturb my repose, and overturn my destiny. The count de Melcy told us that his son was going to travel for two years, and that he would set out in the course of six weeks. My sister-in-law took this opportunity of giving a sort of moral lecture to Saint-Ibal, exhorting him to preserve in his travels the principles instilled into him. “Yes madam,” said he warmly ; “and I swear, from the bottom of my soul, to bring back with me the same sentiments.”—A look conveyed to me the true meaning of this oath. He quitted us to return with his father to his chateau ; and he left me confounded with his ingenious boldness, but more especially at the effect which it had produced on my heart.

On the second day afterwards, as I was in my room, which looked into the court, about nine o'clock in the morning I heard the noise of a horse arriving at full gallop. The impetuosity of the horse represented to my imagination who the horseman was. I flew trembling to my window and recognized Saint-Ibal. He was already at the foot of the steps before the house. He sprang from his horse. I saluted him : he pressed his hand to his heart with the most passionate expression. I withdrew under an inexpressible agitation. A few minutes afterwards I was sent for to breakfast. I found Saint-Ibal in the dining-room : he gave me an invitation from his father to dine next day with them. He breakfasted with us. After breakfast he returned to the saloon and seated himself at some distance from me. That my countenance and eyes might be fixed on something, I took up my ordinary work, which was a knit-purse. I let my silk ball several times fall, and Saint-Ibal always took it up. At length he kept it, to avoid, as he said, laughing, the trouble of picking it up. He sat at the same distance, but we were connected by the thread which I was working with, and the ball of which he held. He found means with this slender communication of conversing with me so as to be understood. From time to time he drew the thread gently towards him with an expression which seemed to demand an answer. This answer was of so vague and new a kind, it was so easy to be disavowed, that after a good deal of hesitation I could not refrain from making it. I drew, in turn, the thread towards me, and then I felt the thread tremble and vibrate under my fingers—and I could not mistake the expression of trouble, joy, and gratitude ! My

work fell from my hands ! I took it up : the thread continued to speak to me, and I still answered. All this time we were not interrupted by the conversation. What eyes, even the most penetrating, could have discovered this mysterious language ? The baron d'Urbain, who was walking up and down the room, frequently came up to me to speak. Saint-Ibal then gave the thread two gentle shakes. This sort of proceeding was a clear indication to me of his discontent and jealousy. To dissipate this rising discontent, instead of answering the baron, I turned my head another way. All at once the baron seated himself beside me : at that instant Saint-Ibal gave such a rude pull to the thread that it broke.—I rose ; I went and took another place, and I gave over working. Half an hour afterwards Saint-Ibal was obliged to quit us without having it in his power to whisper a single word to me, or even to approach me, so closely was I besieged by the baron and my sister-in-law. I repaired to my chamber, not for the purpose of reflecting sagely on this intrigue, commenced with so much imprudence, but that I might think of Saint-Ibal without constraint or interruption. When we have not yet had any impulse of coquetry, when we have no experience in this way, and when we are only eighteen, we are much more easily entangled than a coquette of thirty, because the greatest follies in love are produced by sensibility and sincerity. I ought to have been afraid of the youth of Saint-Ibal ; but I only saw in his age a security for his candour. He was to go abroad for two years ; but then he had promised me to return with the same sentiments. His father no doubt destined some rich heiress for him ; but this father adored him, and the in-

terest and happiness of his son would easily get the better of every other consideration. These hopes appeared to me so reasonable and so solid, that I did not experience the smallest uneasiness respecting the future.

We went to dine with the count de Melcy : I carried my work there. Saint-Ibal, always at a distance from me, took possession, in a playful manner, of my ball of silk ; and having no other means of corresponding together, we recommenced the mute conversation which he had invented, and which both of us so well understood. I passed two days after this without seeing Saint-Ibal : at length he returned with his father, and my purse was finished that day. The baron then pretended that I had promised it to him. This I positively denied : he insisted. My sister-in-law, with a great deal of dryness, gave false evidence in favour of the baron. During this discussion I felt an extreme degree of impatience. I was at an open window which looked into the garden : I threw the purse on a very high lime-tree, saying, "Take it who will." The baron rushed out with precipitation. A moment afterwards Saint-Ibal also went out, quite secure that he would reach the lime-tree before him, notwithstanding of this little advantage, but with the utmost tranquility, and as if without any design. A number of people were in the saloon : the conversation turned on other subjects, and the purse was no more thought of. However, I was always at the window, and I had my eye on the lime-tree. The baron, who was very large and very unwieldy, and who had no suspicion of the intentions of Saint-Ibal, not even that he had a rival, had gone in quest of a large stick to shake the branches of the tree, or to catch hold of the purse.

During this interval I observed Saint-Ibal spring forward in an instant, and climb to the very top of the tree ; but he was a long time searching for the purse which lay concealed among the leaves. At length he found it at the very moment when the baron arrived with a long and enormous pole — Saint-Ibal descended from the tree, and, shewing him the purse, with a triumphant air, exclaimed, "It belongs to me !" "How!" said the baron, "and by what right ?" "By the right of conquest," replied Saint Ibal. With these words he put the purse into his bosom, and left the baron quite stupified ; and he returned to the saloon with a very simple and a very sage look. The baron, who felt irritated, walked about in the park till night. He did not make his appearance again till Saint-Ibal and all the other visitors had left us. He did not fail to tell his adventure to the countess. She delivered me a very long lecture on the subject. She told me I ought to have shewn my displeasure at the impertinent conduct of Saint-Ibal ; a conduct equally foolish and ridiculous. I answered that the whole scene had diverted me very much, and that if she had seen the baron marching gravely along, dragging a large pole after him, she would have laughed as well as me ; and that it was altogether impossible for me to be angry at such an amusing incident. The countess replied with bitterness. I returned no answer, that the conversation might be dropped ; but from that day her assiduity about me redoubled, and her active vigilance did not leave me a single moment of liberty. She did not stop here. She spoke to the count de Melcy, who, on his side also, never quitted his son, and at the end of seven or eight days the count, under the pretext of buisness of the greatest importance

returned all of a sudden to Paris with his son, without allowing him even time to take his leave of his neighbours. Fifteen days afterwards, he ordered him away for England, from whence he was to go by sea to Portugal and Spain, and from thence to Italy, the termination of his travels.

This departure plunged me into excessive grief, and the most profound chagrin. No more interesting visits ! no more any hope of again enjoying an hour of joy and happiness ! With what indifferance I heard the passage of horses and carriages over the drawbridges.—I had adopted the custom in all chateaus of rising with the break of day ; but with what anguish of heart I now saw the commencement of the day which was to pass without leaving me a single agreeable recollection ! My bad humour was vented on the baron ; but he was so stupid that he did not comprehend the disagreeable things I was telling him on all occasions. To have produced any impression on him it would have been necessary for me to load him with downright abuse. He merely discovered that my air was *somewhat sombre*, which he attributed to the state of my health, respecting which he was perpetually interrogating me. My sister-in-law, who possessed more penetration, easily knew what was passing in my heart ; but she feigned not to have the least suspicion of it, for counting wholly on the long absence of Saint-Ibal, the opposition of his father, and the immense fortune of the baron, she persisted in her project, persuaded also that I should be unable to resist her eloquence and her ascendancy.

At the end of the period of my mourning, the countess at last spoke to me without any reserve of the baron d'Urbain and his passion for me. I

returned for answer that I had no thoughts of marrying again, and that I had besides an invincible aversion for the baron. At this the countess flew into a rage : she wished to insist ; but I cut her short with a declaration in a most firm tone that I would never change my sentiment or opinion, and that she would see that my resolution was final : at this she became quite furious, and in her rage and indignation loaded me with every bitter and cutting epithet which she could think of : she reproached me with the most insulting irony, for entertaining sentiments of affection for a headstrong fool, an idiot, and a child : in this manner she chose to designate Saint-Ibal. I listened coolly to all this torrent of invectives without answering a single word ; at length I rose and addressed her thus :—“Receive my adieu, madam : I shall demand horses, and return instantly to Paris, to resume my situation with the queen.” With these words I withdrew precipitately : she called violently after me, but I did not so much as turn round : I heard her exclaiming :—*What horrible ingratitude !*—I opened the door and went out, and I instantly gave orders for my departure.—Two hours afterwards I entered the carriage, and took the road for Paris.

For fifteen days before, the countess had left nothing undone to ruin Saint-Ibal in my estimation ; she had frequently witnessed the destruction in this manner of esteem and good-will by hatred and envy : she was ignorant that all these means, and even calumny, false reports, plots, and cabals, not only fail to produce any effect on a person whose heart is profoundly touched, but even serve to draw the ties closer which they wish to dissolve, whatever be the nature of the

sentiment we feel, whether it be love or friendship ; for every thing like persecution only attaches us more passionately to the object we truly love. What reparation ought we not to make for such malevolence !—To thwart openly sentiments of a strong nature is the sure means of confirming and exalting them. This constancy is a mode of vengeance quite allowable, and which is delightful to exercise towards those who declare themselves the enemies of an object that is dear to us. The scene which had taken place only made me renew with fresh ardour the oath of either being Saint-Ibal's, or of preserving for ever my liberty.

On arriving at Paris I found a letter from Saint-Ibal, dated from London, conceived in the following terms :—

“I was obliged to part, against my will, without seeing you, without once holding the dear thread which would have expressed my grief and my regret ! Did you sufficiently comprehend that imperfect language which love invented for you ? How could I hope this, when I feel that it is impossible for me to paint to you in a letter that passion which at its commencement was so tender and so violent, that it seems as if my love for you had begun with my first breath ! Did not I read in your heart from the very first day ? Did not I see your disdain and your aversion for him who aspired to your hand, and the despotism which he wished to exercise over you ? Without telling me a single word, have you not revealed every thing to me, your situation, your family secrets, and your sentiments ? Do not these prodigies of love prove that we were born for one another ? — Ah, do not doubt it— I am your's : and I am going to pass two dreadful years

without seeing you !— I was strongly tempted to break off this cruel journey, but I should have irritated the best of fathers, and I am only twenty ! I wish to acquire the right of saying to him :— *Notwithstanding absence and distance I have loved for two years the object most worthy of being beloved !* What could he object to that ? And how would it then be possible for him not to subscribe to what would constitute the happiness of my life ? This is the reason for my departure. You see that we owe every thing to love, even reason. Adieu ! I have neither letters nor promises from you, but I carry with me the purse which I gained, or rather which you gave me by throwing it on the tree ! With what transport I contemplate that work, the charming tissue of mystery and love, every mesh of which recalls to me the expression of a sentiment, and a moment of joy and happiness ! Work continually during our separation, and only for me ; and when an immoveable thread shall pass under your fingers, vouchsafe a sigh for the absence every instant of which will be counted over by me with such grief and anguish.”

In this letter I found whatever could touch my heart ; still however I had courage enough not to answer it : I thought that before taking such a step I ought to wait the consent of his father. The pleasures and the intrigues of the court were unable to withdraw me from the sentiment with which I was wholly occupied. The queen received me with the utmost goodness : she spoke to me more than once of my situation : she told me I was too young not to marry again, and that she would think of it. I answered her by returning a vague expression of thanks. About a month afterwards the queen told me one day,

with an obliging tone, that she was disposed to scold me ; that she knew I had refused to marry the baron d'Urbin, who possessed so great a fortune, and was the most virtuous man in the world, and that she was assured I entertained a romantic passion for the young Saint-Ibal ; that by this conduct I distressed my sister-in-law, by whom I was adored, and that such conduct was neither prudent nor wise, and the more so," added the queen, "as a bad account is given of the character of this young Saint-Ibal, who is besides a mere infant, for I am told he is not more than seventeen or eighteen." I easily discovered from this discourse the intrigues of my sister-in-law, who had been fifteen days at Paris, where she came with the sole intention of injuring me. "Madam," said I, "your majesty is very ill informed : my sister-in-law does not *adore* me. The baron d'Urbin is a stupid man, whom a woman possessed of good sense who intends to be faithful will never marry. M. de Saint-Ibal is twenty instead of seventeen ; his character is very good. I have shown no preference for him, and I have the inclinations which I am supposed to entertain. I shall have sufficient time to reflect on them, for he is now on his travels, and will not return in less than two years." The queen smiled. "This is not the first time," said she, "that I have received an unfaithful report : fortunately," she added, "I have adopted the custom of never pronouncing a positive judgment on any ill which I hear, or on any complaint which is made to me." This conversation was interrupted by an incident foreign to my story, but which I cannot forbear to relate. The countess de Senecé, a lady about the queen's person, entered with a countenance of the utmost consternation, saying that she had

discovered a thing altogether unheard of.—She then stated, that having the care of the queen's jewels, she had put by, for some time back, a considerable number of them, which had been successively broken, and that wishing to have them repaired, she perceived with the greatest surprise that something was wanting for every dress; one wanted a chain, another a ring or a stone, &c. which was quite inconceivable, as she had always kept the key of the box in which these jewels were contained. At this recital the queen began to laugh. "It is evident," said she, "that these jewels have been stolen; but do not alarm yourself, I know the robber." "How madam?" "Yes, and I am the person. You shall hear the fact," continued the queen,—"You know that I am applied to by numbers of unfortunate persons.—I give money when I have it, but sometimes I have none, and I feel such pain in refusing the assistance which is asked from me, that I have invented a means of supplying the place of money: when I have none. I break a necklace and give away a piece of it, a plume of feathers, or a bracelet*." This affecting avowal of the queen produced a strong impression on us. From that day forwards I attached myself sincerely to that virtuous princess, who is so deserving of being beloved for her own sake.

Among the men admitted into the select society of the queen, I particularly remarked the old duke of Bellegrade.—I regarded with curiosity this first love of the beautiful Gabrielle d'Estrées†; in him I imagined I beheld all the

* Historical.—Memoires de Madame de Motteville.

† Historical.

gallantry of the court of Henry IV. His figure is always noble, and his physiognomy agreeable.— He was handsome five years ago, and I know that eight or nine years before he had inspired Mademoiselle de Guise, who was then only sixteen, and the most beautiful person at court, with a strong passion for him. This love was crossed by Madame de Guise, who entertained the same sentiments for the duke*. Those men who have been eminently successful with women, when they can preserve themselves from becoming silly, and have a little wit, derive in their old age from this frivolous sort of celebrity advantages which give them in the world a kind of consideration quite peculiar. They arrogate to themselves the *important* right of deciding imperiously whether the young people who make their debut in the world are amiable or pretty, and their judgments are considered as oracles. I was fortunate enough to please the duke de Bellegarde: without him I should have long, perhaps always, been confounded in the crowd, but his suffrage drew on me the general attention, and caused me to be immediately distinguished by the queen. Princes may themselves discern merit when they possess it; but as they are always absent, and little occupied with other people, they require to be informed of the charms of wit: they frequently mistake the adroit insinuations of flattery for grace; and even when they are in a state of judging correctly, it is very rare, as they do not listen, that they can be struck with superiority of talents in a mere conversation, or perceive their own deficiency when any thing they do is approved of. The duke de

* Historical.

Bellegarde in praising me established my reputation : he was believed ; he immediately gave rise to a prejudice in my favour, which gave me confidence and brought me into vogue. The queen was persuaded that I should please, and amuse her ; this idea alone furnished me the means, because it authorised me to speak without constraint ; and the right to say every thing always renders a person amiable who is incapable of abusing it, and who without malice or ambition is natural and gay.

Eighteen months elapsed, during which I regularly received passionate letters from Saint-Ibal ! The count de Melcy frequently came to court ; I endeavoured to please him, and I flattered myself with having succeeded, when one day he demanded the favour of a particular conversation with me. I fixed next day, and I waited with a great degree of emotion—He came, and after a long preamble, told me that he had discovered his son's passion for me, and he declared that he had entered into other engagements for him. " And my word," he added with a solemn tone, " is inviolable and sacred." " But how, Sir," I answered, " could you enter into a positive engagement without consulting your son ?" " My son has always been submissive to my wishes, and if he ceased to be so, I should disinherit him and marry again next day :—thus, Madam, if you wish to be the cause of a total disunion between a father and his son, continue to nourish his foolish hopes, otherwise put an end to them for ever." On hearing these words, indignation rendered me for an instant mute : at length, recovering the use of speech, " I see," said I, " you count the happiness of your son nothing." Here he interrupted me

with a malicious smile, "It is true, Madam, I reckon romantic notions very little, and a grand establishment a great deal."—"Enough, Sir, you may rest assured you have for ever extinguished in me the desire of becoming your daughter-in-law. I own I love your son, but in listening to you I make the renunciation almost without effort." "This is not enough, Madam; it is necessary for the happiness of my son that he should be for ever ignorant of this conversation, and that he should attribute your refusal to your indifference or your change. If he learns the step I now take, he will persist in his folly; and I have the honour of telling you, I shall disinherit him, marry again, banish him from my house, and never see him again as long as I live.—Adieu, Madam, reflect well on this. I shall see from your conduct, whether there is any truth in the sublime generosity of the romantic sentiments which inspire you with so much disdain for ambitious ideas." On pronouncing these words, he quitted me. I remained petrified.—My rage equalled my grief. Such were the sang froid and the character of this man that the smallest hope was not left me. What course could I take? By revealing my sentiments to Saint-Ibal, and confiding what had taken place to him, I should deprive him for ever of the false but highly respectable opinion which he entertained of the affection of his father; I should embroil them together; I should render myself the subject of universal blame: I should destroy the fortune of the man I loved: I had none myself to offer him, and I should procure him the reputation of a bad son and a madman. On the other hand, how could I bring myself to assure Saint-Ibal that I never loved him? True I had never answered any of his letters; but he devised the

reason of that himself: he saw that I waited the consent of his father, and consequently his own return, before I would wholly explain myself.—How could I disavow the understanding established between us at the chateau de * * * ? or how could I declare to him that I had changed my mind, and that my heart was no longer the same ? These reflections distracted me ; however, from the first moment I resolved to sacrifice myself ; and I have had the courage to adhere to that resolution.

From this fatal interview, far from desiring the return of Saint-Ibal, I dreaded it above all things ; and I shuddered at the thought of the cruel state of embarrassment in which I should inevitably be placed.

Saint-Ibal at length returned after the expiration of the two years. What was my agitation on seeing him one morning enter my chamber ! Joy and felicity was spread on his countenance—He threw himself at my feet, exclaiming : “ You may now answer me, my father knows all.” “ Well ? ” —“ Well, this, is his answer :—*You must first, my son, be certain that you are beloved. Speak to Madame de Beaumont, and then I shall explain myself.*” “ These are his own words,” continued Saint-Ibal, “ and is not that a consent ? ” “ Do not believe him ” —“ Heavens, what an idea ! my father’s wishes are centered in my happiness ; his frankness is equal to his affection for me—Ah ! speak without dread and without delay, that I may instantly return to this good and tender father, who will share my joy when I inform him : I have learnt nothing from her conversation.” In expressing himself thus, Saint-Ibal could not retain his tears, and mine flowed involuntarily. This illusion respecting his father

wrung my heart ; I felt how shocking it would be to deprive him of it, and I resolved to sacrifice myself : but what a stab I was going to give him, and how could I bring myself to do it !—Trembling and scarcely able to speak, I forced him to sit down, and I conjured him to listen to me with calmness ; he obeyed with equal alarm and trouble.—He looked at me in silence ; at length I told him with a broken voice ; “ Saint-Ibal, I can never be your’s.”—Great God ! when there is no obstacle to separate us, when my father’s consent is ready.”—“ I cannot be your’s.”—“ And why ?”—“ Let this suffice you, ask me no farther.”—“ What ! shall I submit to such a dreadful sentence without demanding an explanation ! Can you expect it ! Cruel woman ! have you then deceived me ? Were those misterious hopes you gave me before my departure merely an amusement for you !—Barbarous amusement ! Did you not see then the sincerity with which I loved you ? How could you allow me to indulge in so fatal an error ! And my letters, which proved to you the constancy of my violent passion, how could you receive them without undeceiving me !—At least, answer me—You did not love me ?”—“ Your letters ! I never received any.”

I had meditated this untruth, which appeared indispensable, and which completed the despair and fury of Saint-Ibal ; he accused me of falsehood, ingratitude, and perjury ; his rage went to my soul, but it proved his love, and in that I found a sort of consolation. I persisted so stoutly in maintaining that I had never received his letters, that at last he believed me ; but he still continued to reproach me with equal bitterness for the hopes I had given him at the chateau de*** ; he quitted me in despair, and left me in a more pitiable

condition than his own. Resolved, however, on sacrificing myself, I experienced a sort of relief in the idea that this dreadful explanation was over, and that I was relieved from it. Alas ! what would have been the use of telling him the truth—I could not own my sentiments to him without discovering the harshness and horrible falsity of his father, and without depriving him of his esteem for one whom his duty commanded him to revere. Saint-Ibal really admired and cherished his father ! Was it not a crime to annihilate this sweet and sacred sentiment in his heart ; a sentiment love even could not replace nor indemnify him for the loss of ! Were I to be so weak, would not Saint-Ibal himself one day blame me for it, and regret the fortune, the rank, the honours which he would lose from the enmity of his father ? All these reflections served to fix me irrevocably in the generous design which I had resolved on.

The unhappy Saint-Ibal, unable to conceal his grief, deposited it in the perfidious bosom of him who was the cause of it ; he confided every thing to his father, who clearly discovered from his despair, that I had kept his secret and mine. I thought that this man, so incapable himself of generosity, would at last be confounded at mine ; but I was mistaken : grovelling souls admire nothing, because they disbelieve in every thing either great or disinterested. They always suppose the vilest motives for the noblest actions, and they then applaud themselves in secret for their imagined penetration, which they consider as a great proof of superiority and talent. The count de Melcy was persuaded that his positive and absolute declaration of disinheriting his son had taken from me all intention of marrying him, and that

I acted with perfect sincerity and without effect, as the marriage with Saint-Ibal would be no longer advantageous for me, but on the contrary the very worst marriage that I could make. This manner of judging, and the violent grief of his son, completely quieted him with respect to my conduct, and were the most complete security with him for my discretion. When his son questioned him respecting the men whom I saw, the count told him that Varicarville, attached to the count de Soissons, was desperately in love with me, and that I was suspected to share his sentiments. Saint-Ibal returned in a rage to me next day, to reproach me with this pretended passion: it was easy for me to justify myself by proving to him that I had long ceased to see Varicarville, who in reality had offered to marry me. "But who is my rival then?" said Saint-Ibal; "be at least sincere with me; own that you once had an impulse of preference for me, and that afterwards a more fortunate object has inspired you with a real passion: you were only eighteen when you allowed me to indulge those fatal hopes; your youth may render you excusable; but open your heart to me, and pity the situation in which I am; your sincerity and confidence would mitigate my sufferings. Do you also reject me as a friend?—You weep!—Your conduct is inexplicable. Why do you weep?—Do you also entertain an unfortunate passion?"—"Yes, Saint-Ibal, very unfortunate."—"Ungrateful woman, what do I hear?—Great God! then it is true that you entertain an affection for another!—You own it to me then at last. Ah! what perfidy!—However, finish your cruelty: who is then the object whom you passionately love?"—"I cannot tell you." "I shall discover him you may rest

assured : and as I shall not then owe the discovery to your confidence, nothing can then withdraw this hated rival from my fury !"—“ I shall never marry him.” “ Why, is he engaged ? ” “ No, he is free.” “ What obstacle then separates you ? ” “ An invincible obstacle.” Beloved by you, can he possibly have another sentiment ? You sigh ! O providence ! he does not return your love. How I pity you ! you feel all that I suffer.”

Saint-Ibal continued to interrogate me a long time respecting this supposed rival, but obtaining no information, he left me more discontented than ever. Agreeably to what he announced to me, he made new inquiries from his father and others, and the result of them was the strangest idea : he was told that Monsieur, the king's brother, treated me with a great deal of attention and kindness, and he imagined that I entertained in secret an extravagant passion for that prince. I wished at first to drive this foolish idea out of his head, but in vain ; in the end, without altogether agreeing to it, I left him to entertain this notion. I was influenced by several motives ; I felt that if Saint-Ibal was not thoroughly persuaded that I entertained a violent passion for another, he would soon discover my fatal secret, and as it was necessary to give him an imaginary rival, Monsieur's greatly preferable to any other, because Saint-Ibal could not seek a pretence for quarreling with him. What completely convinced Saint-Ibal of my passion for Monsieur, was my aversion for the dutchess de Montbason, with whom Monsieur was in love ; I did not positively agree to it, but I owned, and I repeated, that I felt an unfortunate passion. Saint-Ibal was in despair and deeply affected, but he spoke to me incessantly on the subject. I paint-

ed to him in true colours the misery of loving without hope ; I found a sort of pleasure in entertaining him every day with the sentiments of which he was the object. It is true, I could only excite his jealousy and wring his heart, by detailing to him the passion he inspired me with ; but I enjoyed even his sufferings ; we wept together ; an intimate confidence was established between us ; he was at least persuaded that I felt for him the warmest and most tender friendship, and the hope that I would be cured of my foolish passion sweetened the bitterness of such a strange situation. Our conversations became gradually less melancholy, and sometimes they were relieved by gaiety. He never let slip an occasion of ruining Monsieur in my mind. I never failed to defend Monsieur, but I listened without rage, and even smiling to all the injuries which he loaded him with ; from this he concluded that I began to love him less, and that if he should succeed in entirely depriving him of my esteem, I should again recover my reason and my liberty.

At the end of a few months he recommenced his interrogatories respecting the state of my heart. " And you," Saint-Ibal, I demanded " what are your sentiments now ?" " Ah ! you know them but too well, I am not less constant than you ; I am still the same."—" Heavens ! is it possible ? Can neither my love, nor my fidelity, nor my indulgence touch you. Yes, my indulgence, for I ought to hate you ; and you sacrifice me to an absurd and chimerical passion. What can you expect from it ?" " Nothing." " How can you be so foolish as to nourish it ?" " I do not nourish it ; it overpowers me notwithstanding all my endeavours ; because I cannot avoid the object of it." " Fly then, return to the chateau de ***, I will follow you. Ah ! when you shall be again in the

chamber, in the place where you gave me that perfidious ball of silk, will you feel no remorse, and will you thus deprive me of all hope?" "Believe me, Saint-Ibal, I shall be then what I am here." "This is too much! I shall be the person then to give you an example of courage. I shall never see you again. I am to be attached to the count de Soissons; he is going to set out on a long journey. I have a dispensation, but I will follow him, and I shall set out in two days." "Your absence will affect me a good deal; it will deprive me of my only consolation." "Dare you speak to me in this manner!" "I tell you the truth Saint-Ibal; notwithstanding my misfortune and my singularity; I love you, and in preference to any other person." "What inconceivable language! And you have an invincible passion for another?" "This passion will not permit me to marry you; but my friendship for you is so tender, that if I could unite myself to the object of my love, I should make the sacrifice without hesitation, if I believe it necessary to your happiness." "There is in your character, your conduct, and your conversations, an incoherence and singularity which drive me to despair. But are you very sure that this inclination is insurmountable, or even that it exists? Is it not rather some romantic idea, some flight of imagination? In the name of heaven, reflect better on your situation." "No, Saint-Ibal, it is impossible to be mistaken respecting a sentiment which has been so long felt." "Adieu then, I shall set out in two days."

He took his departure accordingly. I wrote to him during the time of his absence; he answered me with equal irritation and love; his letters were passionate and filled with reproaches. In my situation this was all that I could desire. On his

return I found him the same. Obliged to hold the same language with him, I at length deprived him of every hope. For several months he ceased altogether to see me, and when he met me he affected to avoid me. What gave me the greatest uneasiness was a marriage for him which was incessantly spoken of. The count de Melcy, who disseminated these false reports, had in reality, no desire to see him married. Although his mode of living was very magnificent, his avarice was so sordid, that the idea of giving up a small part of his fortune inspired him with the desire of deferring as long as possible the period of his marriage; but he rejected no proposition which was made, making the false hopes which he threw out on the subject to different persons serve for forwarding his ambitious intrigues.

Saint-Ibal, still irritated against me, seemed to attach himself seriously to Mademoiselle de S***, a rich heiress, young and beautiful, and of high birth.

One day that I was invited to dine with the dutchess de Chevreuse, my trouble was extreme on entering to find there Madame de S*** with her daughter and Saint-Ibal: the latter affected to be very much occupied with Mademoiselle de S***; but sat at table beside her, whispered to her several times, and displayed the greatest gaiety. All these endeavours to pique me and to excite my displeasure produced a directly contrary effect, for they proved to me that Saint-Ibal continued to love me. Men are quite unskilful in this sort of artifice; the most able, always go very awkwardly to work. Saint-Ibal, who flattered himself that if he could not afflict me, he would at least mortify my vanity, saw with the greatest chagrin my profound tranquillity.

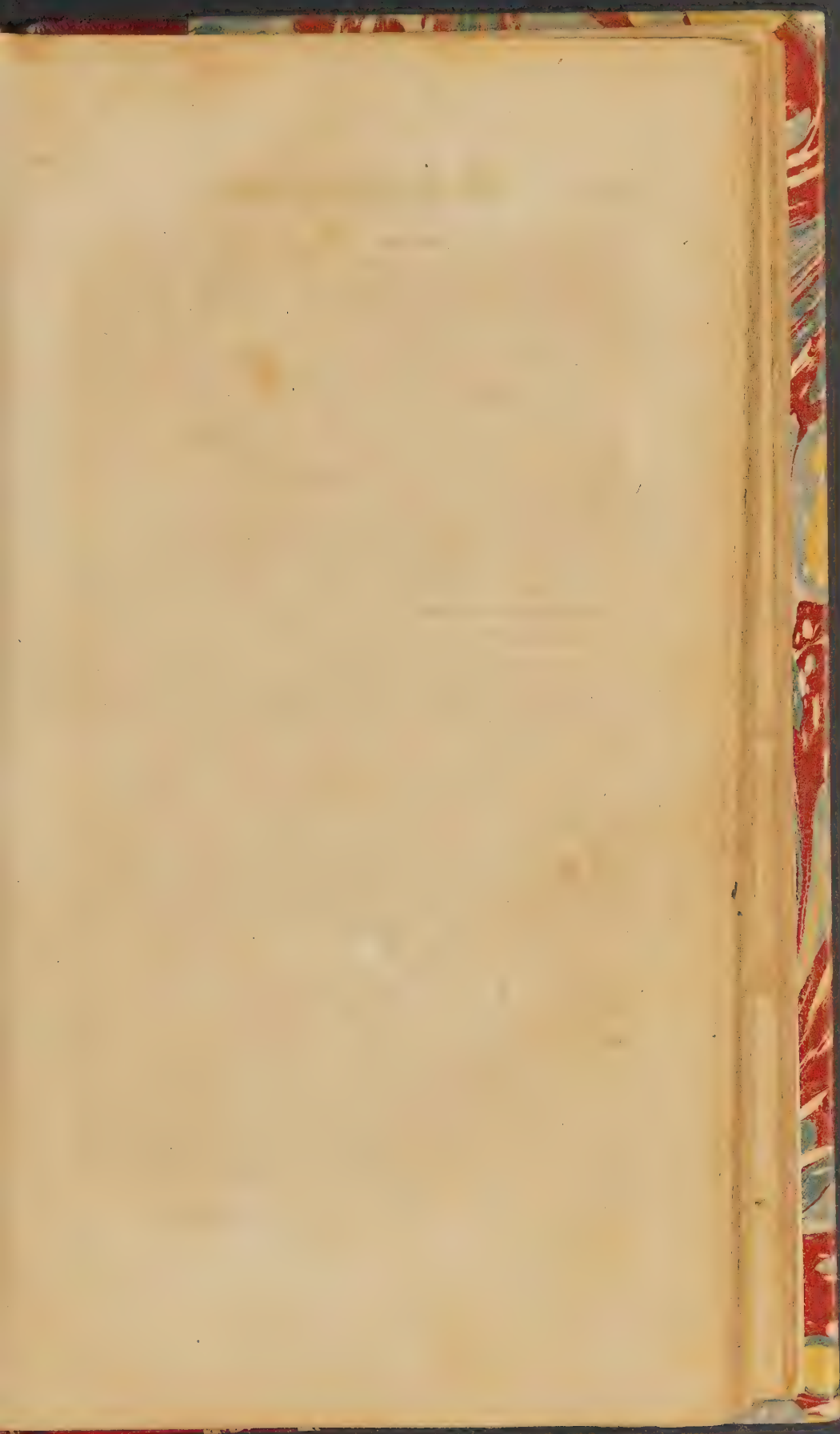
ty : I completely discomposed him by laughing very naturally at his forced pleasantry. He lost all his pretended gaiety, he became irritated, and he vainly endeavoured to dissemble it. After dinner the dutchess de Chevreuse drew from her work-bag a large ball of silk, and desired Mademoiselle de S*** to divide it in two, that is to say, to form a second from what was drawn from this great ball. Mademoiselle de S*** consented, on condition that some one should hold the ball from which she wound the half. Saint-Ibal offered. Mademoiselle de S*** took hold of the end of the silk, Saint-Ibal, holding the ball, withdrew reeling ; his hands shook ; he looked at me, saw me grow pale, and with my eyes fixed on this agitated silk ! The ball escaped from his fingers, and rolled to the other extremity of the room.—Saint-Ibal, resting on the back of a chair, said, "*It is a giddiness !*"—Every one rose and hastened to him ; I alone remained in my place in a condition impossible to be described. Saint-Ibal came to himself ; he was made to sit down, the ball was picked up and taken by the dutchess de Chevreuse ; the work was no longer thought of, and other things were talked of. Madame and Mademoiselle de S*** went away. Saint-Ibal drew near to me : his physiognomy was no longer the same ; he had seen my extreme emotion, and resumed his hopes : he could not speak to me, because I was seated between two females ; but instantly laying hold of the ball of silk which was placed on a small table beside the dutchess, he said he wished to make amends for his awkwardness, and proposed to me to wind it. At this unexpected proposition I blushed, I stammered : never was there an embarrassment equal to that which

I felt ; however, it was impossible to refuse. I took the ball, and when I felt the thread drawn through, and vibrate under my fingers, when I recognised this old language, as tender and expressive for me at the end of six years as it was in the beginning of our loves, I was quite beside myself. Then Saint-Ibal, who was standing about ten paces from me, placed one knee on the ground, and said with an agitated voice, "It is thus I ought to be."—He afterwards interpreted these words by adding that the attitude was more convenient for the work I was engaged in. During all this time there was a general conversation ; and besides it was impossible to divine what was passing between us, as this scene was not remarked by any person. I took my departure ; Saint-Ibal followed me ; gave me his hand, and thanked me with the greatest transport. I knew not what I answered, for I was no longer myself. I was sure that he would call on me next day. What could I say to him ? How could I afterwards disavow my sentiments ? After much anxiety and reflexion, I at last determined on the resolution that I could take.

Next day Saint-Ibal appeared. "At length," he exclaimed, "you have triumphed over that romantic idea which has only filled your imagination ! You are mine !" "Listen, Saint-Ibal," I replied : "my existence depends on a great secret ; I can only confide the half of it to you, that which you are the most interested in ; but I do so under the express condition that you will not interrogate me respecting the remainder, for I have sworn by all that is most sacred never to reveal it. This beginning astonished and frightened him ; however, he did not hesitate to take the oaths which I exacted of him in the strongest terms. "Very well," said

I then to him, "when I repeated to you that I entertained a passion equally invariable and unfortunate, I did not deceive you, nor did I deceive myself, but I concealed the object of it from you." "Who is it then?" "You, Saint-Ibal; I have never loved but you." At these words he threw himself at my feet and gave expression to all that the most lively joy and the most tender love could inspire. "Alas!" said I "we shall not be the happier for it! An insurmountable, obstacle, which it is impossible for you to divine, opposes our union; and that is the other part of my secret which I ought to conceal from you, and respecting which you have given me your word of honour never to interrogate me." Saint-Ibal remained confounded. However, in this conversation, the joy of learning that I never loved another triumphed in his heart over every other sentiment; but at last his grief was extreme. Not daring to interrogate me, or rather knowing the inutility of it, he fell upon a thousand extravagant conjectures; and he was so far from divining the truth, that he confided his distress to his father with request that he would question me. The only consolation, which somewhat mitigated his chagrin, was the assurance which I gave him that certain events, or at least time, might smooth the obstacles which stood in the way of our happiness. Such is still our situation. Saint-Ibal, always constant, will never truly hurt me: he sometimes escapes from me: trifling distractions sometimes deprive me of him for some time, but he always returns. His confidence, his esteem, his friendship, are for me the pledges of a durable attachment, which the lapse of six whole years has only served to fortify.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





MADemoisELLE
DE LA FAYETTE
AN HISTORICAL NOVEL,
ILLUSTRATING
THE CHARACTER AND MANNERS
OF THE
COURT OF LOUIS XIII.
BY MADAME DE GENLIS.

.....
TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.
.....

First American Edition revised, with additional Notes.

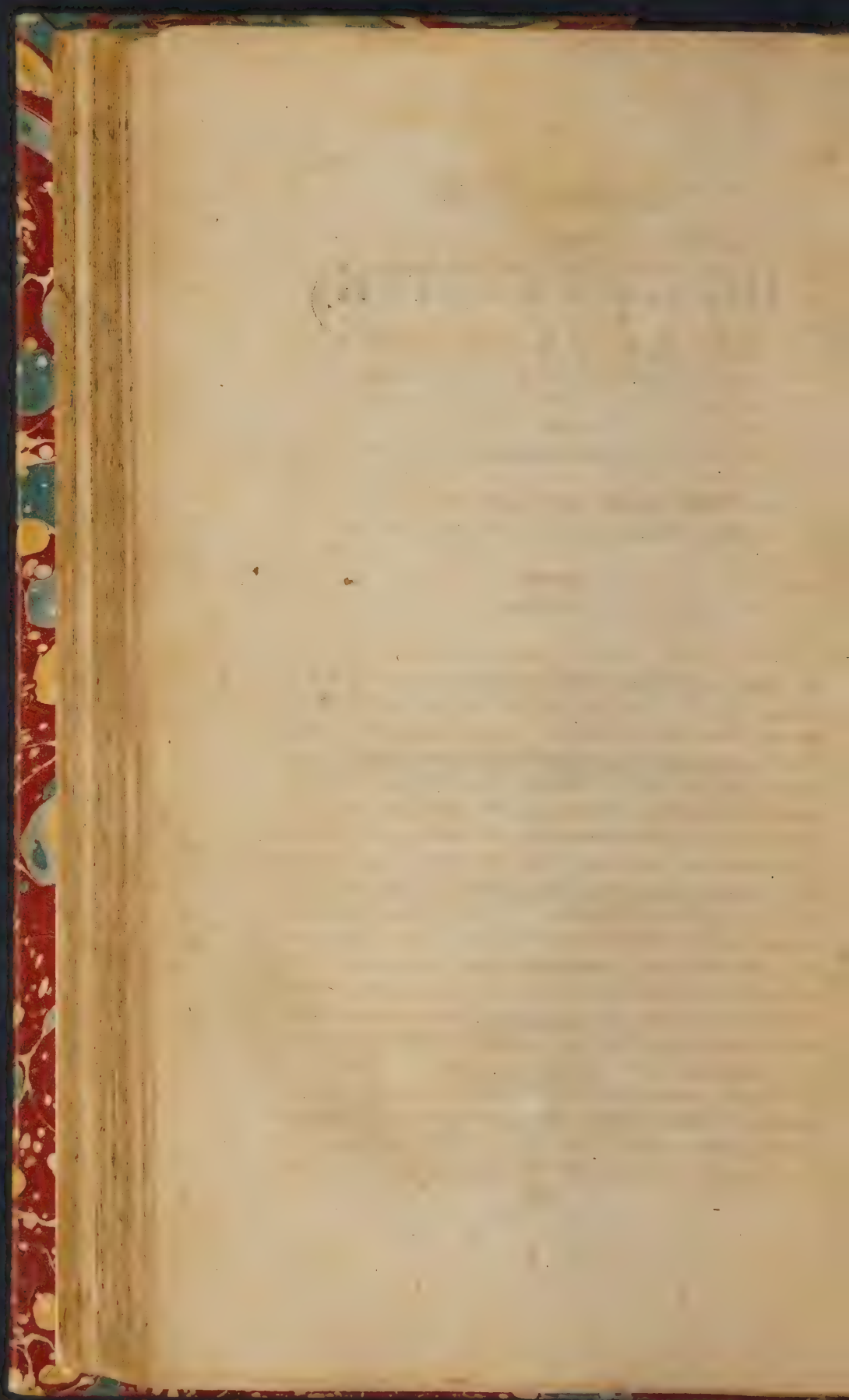
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MADemoisELLE
DE LA FAYETTE;

OR,

THE AGE OF LOUIS XIII.

WHEN the Marchioness de Beaumont had finished her story, Mademoiselle de la Fayette said, that it did not appear to her so difficult as she thought to conquer those obstacles which were opposed to her union with Saint-Ibal. There was little to effect after, if the ambition of this unworthy father, the count de Melcy, could be satisfied with the friendship of the queen, that of the count de Soissons, and the good will of the king ; was that an impossible achievement ? “ I have well reflected,” replied the marchioness, “ and I am without hope : first, the queen can do nothing ; secondly, the count de Soissons is not regarded by the cardinal, and has no interest ; lastly, the count de Melcy, by the powers of intrigue, has obtained every honour which can insure a brilliant life at court.

Those who have done much service to the state are often insatiable after honours, because these distinctions serve as future trophies of renown, and become also titles of glory ; in which

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posterity trace the remembrance of their great actions.

When a new favour is accorded to the count de la Meilleraye, in it is recalled an infinity of glorious exploits. When the count de Melcy obtains an offering from the court, many ill-natured persons recount some anecdotes, either true or false, concerning the intrigue that has purchased it. And this is because ambition, in an intriguer destitute of sterling merit, always degenerates into avarice ; honour cannot support it. The count de Melcy is such a being : it is wealth that he wishes, it is solely wealth that he desires. He will only marry his son to a woman sufficiently rich to content him, by a certain inheritance, but who will require no actual sacrifice ; to a woman sufficiently credulous to be dazzled by his pompous airs, his gaudy magnificence, his important and solemn tone, and his affected intimacy with the ministers with whom he flatters himself he is thought the friend, because no person in the world pays them more assiduously an habitual court ; which, when continued with constancy, induces the supposition of being in great esteem and credit in a country where every thing is attributed to interest."

"But," replied Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "cannot the king give a portion to a person who interests him ? If ever I acquire any influence over his mind, the first use I shall make of it will be to implore his generosity for the benefit of my friend."

"No," interrupted the marchioness, "you will make a more worthy use of that influence of which you speak : you will employ it only for the glory of the king, and for the good of the

state. Saint-Ibal and myself have no right to such benefactions. The cardinal de Richelieu will oppose excellent reasons to such ill-placed liberality. The king, naturally equitable, would reflect upon it at a time above all in which war and the state of the finances will not allow him to recompense, even as many old soldiers as have fought valiantly. Finally, the king would take ill so unreasonable a demand; he would esteem you less for it; the attempt would miscarry, you would lose your own credit without being able to serve me. Besides, you have pledged me your word to preserve faithfully my secret, thus you can take no proceedings relative to this secret except with my consent, and I explicitly refuse it on this point.'

At these words, Mademoiselle de la Fayette embraced her friend whose reflections she was convinced were perfectly just, and she praised her principles and her disinterestedness.

"Thus it is," said the marchioness de Beaumont; "I show only common sense; but such is the advantage of having some reasonable friends—these do not engage in false chimeras, they ask only useful services; and it is these who make less importunate and more disinterested ones appear only inconsiderate and heedless."

"Ah!" replied Mademoiselle de la Fayette, sighing, "I shall never perhaps have occasion to profit by your judicious counsels. In the midst of the cares of war, the king will doubtless forget me, and I shall no longer find him the same at his return."

"No, no, you could never be forgotten, and the king is constant in his friendship; he is only detached when he has found himself deceived. I

confess, I should regret it. There is nothing failing in him, I am assured, to constitute a great monarch, only to know the truth, and to be able to reckon on the disinterestedness and attachment of the person capable of discovering it to him; but he is mistrustful, after so many fatal proofs he ought to be so. Will he believe me?

"We believe as soon as we love."

Mademoiselle de la Fayette did not combat the justness of this maxim; her heart confirmed it.

However, the news of the army was soon received, announcing brilliant success obtained by the valour of the king, and that of the French troops. We have since seen exploits a thousand times more astonishing, but in no time have we witnessed a martial ardour more universally spread than that which then existed in France. Two princes of the church, cardinals, were named among the most intrepid warriors (1); and the glory of bearing arms under the orders of their king, and to defend their country, not only sheltered them from ridicule, but (in an age so religious) has shielded them from the blame that would have attached to priests transformed into soldiers.

At the court they spoke only of arms and of the king: in this moment of glory and of peril Louis XIII. was no longer the weak and uncivilized prince who usually was so little remarked; he was a brilliant monarch, and worthy of the throne—he was represented in the midst of perils at the head of his troops; the prayers of all were for him—he was beloved, admired, he reigned.

Each day of absence and each new intelligence added a degree of exaltation to the sentiments of Mademoiselle de la Fayette for the king. The

purity of her soul assured her security : this attachment could not alarm her ideas ; it had nothing in common with love.

The dangers of Louis made her shudder ; but certain that he was about to hold the reins of government, and to display a great character, it was for France that she trembled. She wished with ardour his return, not for the frivolous pleasure of seeing him and conversing with him of herself, but to speak to him of his duties, to elevate his soul, to inspire him with generous resolutions, and to impress them in him. Such were, at least, the thoughts and the illusions of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

At last every one with transport learnt the glorious end of the campaign. The king took some places where the Spaniards were assembled, and these last, completely conquered, were obliged to repass the Somme ; on another side the Imperialists, who had penetrated into Burgundy, were driven even to the Rhine by the cardinal de la Valette and the duke de Weimar.

Who has ever been able to resist the French commanded by able generals ?* And do we not know, even in the present day, that the captain who would have sufficient courage and genius to propose to such soldiers exploits beyond all that history has transmitted to us, even of the most miraculous, would find no obstacles, and that intrepid warriors, worthy of receiving his magnanimous orders, would execute them without even shewing that astonishment which might be expected from them at such prodigies.†

*Every reader of the present day (1814) can answer this question.

† It is because they are shackled by the chains of an

Nation, heroic as brilliant ! who alone, in the midst of all the people of the earth, seem to be sheltered from the decline, which often follows a long career of success, and which, after having grown old in glory, not only preserves its pre-eminence, but is still elevated by an *eclat* that was never before seen, and by some unheard-of triumphs !

The king returned ; even fears had been entertained for Paris itself, and this sovereign heretofore so little beloved, was received with transport. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, a witness of this universal joy, saw in Louis only the worthy successor of Henry the Great, and the inheritor of all his glory. In the intoxication of such illusions, she thought that now even the advice of friendship would be useless, and that of his own accord he would repress the haughtiness of Richelieu, lower this potent usurper, and resume royal authority.

The king, the day after his arrival, received all the court, and the whole body of the state. He spoke with grace and dignity. In the evening he was at the circle of the queen ; he was then charming, full of affability, and he found means to prove, by a thousand delicate assiduities of manner to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, that he was more engrossed by her than ever.

This very evening, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, though, as usual, in mourning, and keeping her vow, was still, without any ornament, enchanting ; her countenance was so animated, her complexion so dazzling, her beauty had something in it so touching, that every one was struck with admiration.

insatiable despotism ; whose commands they dare not dispute.

It was on this evening that the sentiments of the count de Soissons and of the count de Meilleraye were visible for her.

Saint-Ibal, who was behind Mademoiselle de la Fayette, said to her quite low, "Do you wish to know to what excess jealousy and envy can disfigure a beautiful woman? Cast your eyes on madame la dutchess de Montbason—examine her when she looks at you."

"And whence can this jealousy arise?"

"Are you ignorant then of her pretensions over the heart of the count de Soissons?"

"I see nothing of all that," replied mademoiselle, with perfect abstraction. In fact, she saw only one object.

The next morning Louis was with the queen, remained some minutes, and staid only an instant in the apartment of the maids of honour. The king approached Mademoiselle de la Fayette, addressed her with some obliging expressions, and afterwards, leading her aside, he said to her, "I know not yet when I shall be able to renew those interviews which are so dear to me; for after an absence of many months, I find myself overwhelmed with buisness."

"Ah! so much the better," cried Mademoiselle de la Fayette; "I would, sire, you were always thus occupied."

The king smiled. "Yet you often hear me condemned for being indolent," he replied; "but I have asked you to suspend you opinion, and to judge of me only after having understood me."

"Ah, sire! why wait for that, when the heart can foresee all?"

"May yours always justify me, it will not deceive you, and I shall be consoled for much injustice."

After having pronounced these words, with a tenderness which touched mademoiselle, even in the recesses of her soul, the king left the apartment.

A camp life, the movements of war, successes, ideas of glory, universal praise, a tender rising passion,—all these at this moment conspired to draw Louis from his habitual indolence. He announced to the cardinal that he wished to devote himself to public affairs. The cardinal appeared to applaud this resolution; very certain that it would not be durable.

While poets had celebrated, with much industry and emulation, the triumph of our armies, already French literature arose from obscurity—works of science and merit began to be produced; we possessed the poems of Malherbe; Racan his pupil, and some others had entered with honour into the road that had been opened. The theatre alone preserved its ancient barbarism; it still presented only a *spectacle*, bereaved of taste and of interest; occasionally interspersed with pieces very perplexed, without imagination, and without probability, always weak, unnatural, and grossly ridiculous, both in style and plan; nevertheless these pieces were applauded, and the *spectacle* was universally liked.

Many *fêtes* were given at the court and at the city; every person of letters profited by this moment of enthusiasm to offer to the public new productions of every kind.

A young poet, then a particular protégé of the cardinal, hastened to give the French theatre a tragedy that he was just about finishing. Though this poet has since said,

“Our own value who knows better than ourselves?”

he was far from foreseeing that this tragedy would form the most memorable epoch of French literature, and be the commencement of that brilliant age of the arts to which Louis XIV. was to affix his name ! The most happy anticipations of authorship could not have given to this poet the idea of the splendour of his success, and of the height to which he would be elevated. He was Pierre Corneille, and it was the *Cid* that was about to be performed.

The queen announced that she should attend the first representation of this tragedy, and Louis knowing that she would take Mademoiselle de la Fayette, declared that he would accompany her : besides, he was sure that he should be doubly applauded by appearing in public, and being seen with the queen, who was universally beloved.

The presence of the king and queen being announced, drew an immense world to the first representation of the *Cid*. The king received with emotion the unanimous applause of the multitude. Mademoiselle de la Fayette witnessed it, seated in the back part of the box, behind the lady of honour of the queen. She was situated so as to be seen by the king without his being obliged to turn to look at her.

At last the curtain was raised, and the first scene of the *Cid* commenced. The first exposition excited an interest never before evinced ; a profound silence expressed an attention which nothing could distract, and which strengthened from scene to scene. Surprise and admiration rendered the spectators a long time immoveable—each thought he heard for the first time heroes and lovers speak language so exalted, sentiments so noble, and so pathetic of glory and of love, penetrated every soul, and elevated every mind ! It

was not a theatrical representation—it was not a fiction; it was a sublime revelation of all the human heart could feel of the most touching, of all that it could breathe of the most heroic! All listened with avidity, every one wept, every one scarcely breathed, but no one deared to applaud: they feared to interrupt—they wished to lose nothing, not even a single word!

At last enthusiasm became manifest; a long time condensed, it burst forth with the most impetuous energy. In the midst of redoubled plaudits, cries were a thousand times repeated which called for the author; and at length Corneille was discovered in a small box. Some friends who had purposely surrounded him, now showed him to the public when joy was at its height. By a transport which seized simultaneously upon every mind, by one universal exclamation, he was proclaimed the greatest of all tragic poets, and posterity preserved for him this brilliant title, which he received in the infancy of that art of which he was the creator.

In rendering homage to this wonderful genius, ought we not also to admire the sensible and enlightened nation which knew so well how to appreciate this first *chef-d'oeuvre*?

Heretofore they had seen only the most miserable productions, and yet they served an innate sentiment of the beautiful and the natural so just, that without reflection, without gradation, it was judged at once, in the short space of this memorable evening, with a taste as delicate and as correct as that of the most shining men of the successive age.

Throughout Paris, for the next day, only the Cid was conversed of—the remembrance of every other interest was effaced; ambition even forgot

its hopes, and suspended its projects, to dwell upon this immortal piece.

The strength of genius never showed itself in a more shining manner; and what impression did it not produce on the heart of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and even upon that of Louis himself?

During the whole course of the piece, involuntary looks a thousand times passed between them. Mademoiselle de la Fayette sought a heart which comprised, like hers, the sentiments of Chimene, and her eyes in tears rested on the king. She enjoyed his being so moved; the emotion so lively that he evinced, was to her a certain proof of the sensibility and elevation of his soul, while the admiration that she saw in him added an inexpressible charm to that which she herself experienced.

Louis, notwithstanding the excessive rapture that the tragedy of the Cid had given him, was in a few days overwhelmed by public affairs. It is true, that the cardinal was careful to present them to him in so intricate a state, and so perplexed, that even a man, the most capable of application, would have been terrified at their appearance.

When slothful minds burst all at once from their indolence, it is only to fall again into a more slothful apathy: the effort which has drawn them from their habitual state has cost them so much, that they no longer breathe but in that kind of numbness which they call repose; although overwhelming lassitude is worse than actual fatigue. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, always well treated by the queen, passed every evening with this princess; she heard with pain many epigrams on the labours of the cabinet, to which the king at this moment surrendered himself. They had the appearance of insinuating, that this ardour would

soon relax ; they condemned with asperity the cardinal, for many splendid favours accorded to some of the military after the late campaign, and above all censured the king who had signed them.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette dared not espouse the part of the king, because she feared to defend him with too much warmth ; but she undertook to justify the cardinal. She even made his eulogium, she recalled to memory that it was he who had erected the French academy, and built La Sarbonne, that he had founded the Royal Printing House, that he had established the Garden of Plants, and that he was the benefactor of the great artists*, and of all their literati the most distinguished.

This language displeased many persons, was approved by some others, and at last carried faithfully to the cardinal himself by Chavigny ; but the cardinal concluded that the motive of Mademoiselle de la Fayette was to obtain favour and credit.

People in place are in reality much more modest than we believe them to be, for they always suppose that the promises which we bestow upon them are interested, and they never think that we can love them for themselves.

Flattery then is not as persuasive as we imagine her. She would be, perhaps, less corrupt if she were entirely abused, she would leave, at least, candour ; but as she only half deceives in exalting pride, she gives a general defiance which is understood every where, and which blemishes even friendship.

As it had been predicted about the queen, Louis

* Among others Le Pousin, and Le Sueur.

soon overcome by a labour, that had been rendered so painful to him, restored all his affairs of public interest into the hands of the cardinal, determined to trouble himself with them no longer, except for form sake.

The same day, the count de la Meilleraye, the relation of the cardinal, made a declaration of his passion for Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and of his wishes to obtain her hand; the cardinal approved it, and commissioned Chavigny to inform Mademoiselle de la Fayette of it. Not doubting a favourable reply; the cardinal spoke of it to the king, Louis was moved, and his agitation did not escape the penetrating survey of Richelieu; after a moment's silence the king said—

“Does Mademoiselle de la Fayette wish this alliance?”

“Sire, we are yet in ignorance of her sentiments; but I suppose, that if she has no other engagement she will not reject a proposal, which in every point of view appears so advantageous.”

“I must know her reply; you must acquaint me with it.”

These words, dryly pronounced, served to confirm the suspicions of Richelieu; he did not urge the subject, but spoke on other matter.

The cardinal waited impatiently the report that Chavigny was to make him, and when the latter came he told him, that Mademoiselle de la Fayette, with as much firmness as politeness, had, without hesitation, refused this brilliant alliance; the cardinal instead of evincing discontent, smiled.

“This at least,” said he, “has served to shew me, with certainty, an intrigue already formed: the king is in love with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and they are of one mind. It was said six months before the last campaign, that the king

had a *penchant* for her, but since it has not been spoken of. It is a mutual inclination, I now tell you, and this profound mystery proves, that the king attaches much more importance to this intrigue, than that he has already had with Mademoiselle de Hautefort. Your eminence imagines then that they have secret interviews?"

"No;" replied the cardinal laughing, "that would be too energetic for the king, it will require time to bring him to that, but I do imagine that they correspond.

"Every one boasts the wisdom of Mademoiselle de la Fayette."

"But they speak much more of her spirit; if, therefore, there is no exaggeration in the account, she is ambitious: it is absolutely necessary, that I should have a particular interview with her; I think she herself desires it." "The eulogiums that she bestows, without ceasing, upon your eminence evince it."

"Yes; now I penetrate the motive; she fears that she cannot secure the king, if I opposed obstacles to her wishes. This is palpable in effect; she has shewn me a sincere devotion, far from injuring, I will assist her. The difficulty is to find some means of speaking to her without noise, without its being known."

"The count de Soissons gives a masqued ball in a few days, that will be a favourable opportunity."

"No; she will be masqued; in these kind of interviews it is advisable to observe every turn and play of countenance, more particularly with a young person who has been only eight months at court; besides, the king will certainly be present at this ball, and will be constantly at her side, but I will not delay doing it immediately afterwards; I will seize some advantageous moment to

produce a meeting with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, this may be effected at the dutchess d'Aiguillon's*. Mademoiselle de la Fayette has too much ambition not to be fully alive to the advantages of such a meeting; she will neither disdain nor reject offers such as I can make her."

Great geniuses judge in this manner, when they have delivered themselves up to the torment of public affairs, and are governed by ambition; they have little idea of real grandeur of soul, or of that direct integrity which attaches to the perfection of rectitude. In general this manner of passing judgment upon mankind is tolerably just, but not to admit exceptions would be to disown that which sheds most honour on human nature, it would be to calumniate those few more precious, beings who exist in all classes of society. To discover artifice and insincerity there requires only common penetration, but to discover superior virtue, to be able to read the movements of a delicate and generous heart, to trace its sentiments as we can those of our own features in a mirror, requires that we should have our own minds illuminated by a celestial light, and this light so pure can alone give a character truly divine, as derived from a beneficent and all-powerful protector!

The cardinal was expeditious in giving an account to the king, of Mademoiselle de la Fayette's reply. He observed the countenance of Louis brighten, and the joy and delight which animated his eyes, but he pretended to remark nothing, and quitted the king, pleased with having discovered a secret from which he promised himself to derive much advantage.

Louis the next morning with impatient eager-

* A Niece of the Cardinal.

ness paid a visit to the queen, afterwards intending to have a long conversation with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, but his chagrin was extreme upon learning that she had suddenly set out for Paris, as her friend the Marchioness de Beaumont was dangerously ill.

Louis was anxious that at least Mademoiselle de la Fayette herself should be sensible he felt for her inquietude, he sent twice every day a page to enquire after the health of Madame de Beaumont.

Much was said of these messages, which evinced the highest favour, and the motive was easily divined.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was deeply affected, her friend was pronounced out of danger at the expiration of eight days : when the dutchess d'Aiguillon paid a visit to the Marchioness, she found with her Mademoiselle de la Fayette, with whom she appeared solely occupied, and she invited her to breakfast with her on the following day. When the dutchess had retired, Madame de Beaumont with an expressive smile, looked at Mademoiselle de la Fayette, as she said—

“What do you think of all the pretty speeches that have just been made you? It is surely singular!”

“Not at all, it is only the cardinal who speaks through the dutchess.”

“The cardinal! and why?”

“To gain you over because you are believed to be in favour. If you wish wealth and honour for your friends, unite yourself to the cardinal, be guided by his counsels, and acquaint him with all the king may inform you of.—Betray friendship for lucre, and behold your fortune made!”

“I can comprehend why the cardinal may de-

sire that all persons who approach the king should conduct themselves in this manner ; but how can he have confidence to propose it with a noble frankness, simply saying, *Be devoted to me and you shall have pensions and credit, otherwise I will ruin you!*"

"Is not this eloquence ? there is surely magic in such words, they will delight, persuade, and be effective !

"I am a very insignificant being in the state, and the cardinal is all-powerful, yet I doubt his venturing to speak similarly to me."

"Perhaps his language might be a little more softened to you, but the substance of the discourse would still be the same—promises and menaces."

"It is possible any one can flatter himself with the power to at once evince contempt, and yet seduce."

"Ah ! my God ! politicians despise all men, and most of all incorruptible people, who are in their eyes either hypocrites or dupes."

Mademoiselle de la Fayette accepted the invitation of the dutchess d'Aiguillon merely from politeness and propriety, she distrusted her, and her deportment was cold, distant, and haughty.

The dutchess had that coaxing, cajoling art which seduces and deceives only those who are noviciates in the world. but which succeeds always in women of a certain age, of elevated rank, and of good family.

They are acknowledged, with reason, never to be impertinent nor disdainful, their fondling reception, though general, always flatters a little. It is a false semblance of amiability which no one mistakes, and which leaves an impression on every mind of its artifice and deception, but yet

the world will accord it praise because each individual would wish to be able to persuade others that she is sincere in her turn.

The dutchess had acquired a distinguished reputation as the enlightened protectress of the fine arts and of literature, and those who were the friends of letters could not consent to lower her in general estimation.

It is true that she was the supporter of some Thesis of love, in the form observed then at Sorbonne, for sustaining theological positions.

But ridicule attached much less to her than to the cardinal, who by inventing those profane amusements forgot his situation, and recalled it to others more than he wished.

For the rest, these dissertations established at court that taste for the pleasures of the mind which had shone so bright under the reign of Louis XIV. ; finally, the house of the dutchess was the cradle of the French academy ; Gorneille and Rotrou received therein the most noble encouragements, and the plan of the Cid and of Venceslas was formed in it.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was received with open arms by the dutchess, whom she found alone. During breakfast, to ingratiate herself, she set to work all that flattery could lavish of the seducing caresses, eulogiums on her beauty, her intellect, her predictions of the brilliant future which awaited her. At last she turned the conversation upon the cardinal, and taking a tone less serious, she said, smiling, that she was not unacquainted with her having been, upon more than one occasion, his defender ; then affecting an air of confidence, added, that she must confess the cardinal was an implacable enemy, but that he was also a friend the most ardent and the most generous.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette listened in silence to this preamble, when the door opened and the cardinal himself appeared.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette rose, and shewed an inclination very discreetly to quit the room; the dutchess and the cardinal detained her. They were again seated, and conversed on indifferent subjects. At the end of a quarter of an hour a valet de chambre spoke very low to the dutchess, who asked permission for absence, to have a few minutes conversation with a person upon business in her closet. "Besides," she added, addressing Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "I know that Monsieur le Cardinal will be happy to speak with you freely of this poor count de la Meilleraye, whom you have so cruelly deprived of every hope; therefore I quit you without reluctance for a few minutes."

Having said this, she rose, tenderly embraced Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and retired.

When the cardinal was alone with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, he said to her—

"I have some thanks and some reproaches to offer you: I know, mademoiselle, with what kindness you spoke of me, and above all, it would have been a source of great gratification to me to have beheld you enter into my family, but the links of friendship are sometimes stronger than those of relationship—I wish to be your friend."

Here Mademoiselle de la Fayette bowed with a respectful air, but said nothing in reply.

Courtiers and politicians are excellent physiognomists, they seldom believe what is said to them, they devote themselves to penetrate that which is wished to be concealed from them; they make a peculiar study of the changes of

countenance, a look, a gesture, a manner of listening, informs them often of more than indiscretion or ingenuousness could do.

The cardinal saw upon the countenance of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, a carelessness, a calm, a dignity which produced in him the deepest astonishment ! This phrase, *I wish to be your friend*, these solemn words, from the lips of Richelieu, had effected no change on her countenance !

Her imposing deportment gave to the view of the cardinal more of importance to the conquest he wished to achieve, he had warmly desired it, but now he attached to it a high price ; to be frustrated would be at once a misfortune and a shame. What ! the real sovereign of France, the most fertile negociator, and the greatest politician of Europe, could not gain over a young person of twenty-three years, without experience, and assured of his devotedness ! This doubt was not supportable ; he must then set into action every means of seduction, and employ every art to succeed.

"And you mademoiselle," returned the cardinal, after some moments of silence, "do you wish to be my friend ? you have no longer a father in existence, will you accept me in that place ? will you allow me to offer the counsels of experience, to guide you in a country which cannot be known to you, and of which the roads are so difficult and dangerous it is impossible to wander without being irretrievably lost ?"

"Yes, sir, I can believe it when we engage in dark and bye ways, but there is nothing to fear when, in open day, the great road is pursued with perseverance."

These words, pronounced with a firm voice

and the most independent pride, so much confounded the cardinal that he remained speechless, his eyes fixed on Mademoiselle de la Fayette — Anger and resentment began to mingle with surprise ; however, this elevation of mind, this disdain of his protection and of his friendship, appeared to him so unnatural, that he imagined she was desirous he should tender her more positive and solid offers. This idea reanimated him a little. "Speak freely," said he, smiling, "I know all."

"And what is this all, my lord?"

"The king loves you ; the purity of his heart and of his principles admits of your consent ; his interest, your own, I will say more, that of the state requires that we should be united."

"What kind of union does your eminence propose to me?"

"An entire confidence on your side, an *active* gratitude on mine."

The cardinal had the intention of promising some titles, some estates, some pensions, but Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who had with downcast eyes listened coldly, suddenly raised her view, and regarded him stedfastly. This look silenced him ; he felt that he must assume an adroit manner, with which to venture to make this awe-inspiring female offers that he had lavished upon others with so much success, and without any circumlocution.

While he sought to compose an artificial discourse, Mademoiselle de la Fayette spoke.

"Your eminence," said she, "doubtless, only asks of me personal confidence ; that alone which I can confer, with honour, but I have no secrets, my heart is without ambition, and my life without mystery ; besides the lofty mind of your

eminence will, without difficulty, believe me when I add, that if ever the king deigns to honour me with his confidence, it will not be betrayed by the influence of seduction or of power."

At these words the cardinal coloured, but dissembling his mental anger, he answered :

"The most truly worthy return to the confidence of the king is the ability to give him useful counsel, and I would propose, mademoiselle, to render you capable of that, because the mind in this case cannot supply those lights which you require."

"But, I believe, my lord, that integrity will suffice."

"You have little of the manner of the court ; and perhaps you will learn, at some future day, that proofs of my esteem are not to be disdained."

"No one attaches a higher price than myself to the esteem of your eminence ; I do not think you have given me any proof of it in this interview, but I am sure of having deserved it."

"I have only one word more to say to you," replied the cardinal, quite beside himself ; "it is, that favour here is a mere illusion without my support."

"I cannot believe that, my lord, which degrades my sovereign and yourself."

"Think of what I have effected, and what I am—think of the future ; compare the fate of my enemies with the situation of my friends, and then choose."

"I think upon my duty ; with this single thought, it is possible to be neither seduced by promises nor intimidated by menaces."

At these words the cardinal became furious ; he rose as he said, with a bitter smile, "You

are young and I excuse, therefore, more readily that presumption which enwraps you ; for I am sure you will be cured of it." Saying this, he hastily and abruptly quitted her. Thus it was that rectitude and integrity disconcerted the combinations of experience and the artifices of a man, the most consummate adept in negotiations and in public affairs.

The cardinal had retired with an inextinguishable resolution to ruin her who dared to resist and brave his authority with so much *sang froid* and firmness ; her, who had been able to embarrass and confound him.

The custom of public life and of commerce with the world, do not allow, after a long conversation, that a positive refusal can be mistaken for a dissembled resistance. Loftiness of soul may, perhaps, be attributed to presumption ; but it has a character so decisive, that it is impossible to confound it with artifice. The cardinal well convinced that he could never seduce Mademoiselle de la Fayette, thought now only of the means of removing her for ever from the court.

The count de Soissons, who wished only to give a ball for Mademoiselle de la Fayette, postponed it upon the illness of Madame de Beaumont which would have prevented her appearance ; under a frivolous pretence, he ventured to delay the orders of the king and queen, who had promised to honour the *fête* with their presence. The king, from the same sentiment that the count de Soissons felt, was delighted at finding the day postponed. The cardinal acquainted with all these circumstances and some others thought to profit by them before the return of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

He told the king, that he had met Mademoiselle de la Fayette accidentally at the dutchess d'Aiguillons, that he asked why she rejected the professions of the count de la Meilleraye, and that the question so simple had caused much embarrassment.

At this intelligence the king was in reality himself embarrassed ; he had a discontented and severe air ; because he believed that the intention was to allude to his own commitment with Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

The cardinal pretended not to observe his ingratitude, but said—

“ I have discovered since, secrets that were endeavoured to be concealed from me : the count de Soissons is lost in love with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and from appearances, it is obvious he is not hated by her.”

“ How !”

“ It is for her he gives a *fete* ; it is for her that he delays it ; it is for her that he is desirous of breaking with Madame de Montbazon.”

“ These circumstances evince his love, but not that this love is mutual. She has the reputation of being too discreet to give any hope to a man whom she cannot marry.” *

“ This would not be the first example of a secret marriage of this kind, she is so lovely and so ambitious those say who are acquainted with her.”

“ Ambitious ! and who says that ?”

“ The dutchess de Chevreuse, Chavigny, the Marchioness de Beaumont. But her understanding with the count de Soissons, what proofs are there of it ? I wish to know them—be explicit.”

* To encourage hope where we cannot return affection, is an evidence of a weak head and a vicious heart.

"Sire, I have no interest to make a mystery of what is generally said upon this intrigue."

"Speak then."

"Saint-Ibal, attached to the count de Soissons is for ever with her. It is not certainly upon his own account ; he would not tread thus openly upon the steps of his master. Of all men of the court Saint-Ibal is the one whom Mademoiselle de la Fayette treats the best—indeed they even regularly write."

"They write !"

"And it is known that Saint-Ibal is only the bearer of those letters which are addressed to him."

"Who has told you this ?"

"A rejected desperate lover, the count de la Meilleraye."

"Enough, I will have more information—and if your report be found correct, I will not permit such a person to remain about the queen."

"Sire, it is not a report, it is a simple conversation that the curiosity of your majesty has lengthened ; I speak only from public rumour and from the complaints of a desolate lover."

"Jealousy is in general quick-sighted, but still it is possible that it may be deceived sometimes ; thus I answered for nothing."

The king hastily closed this interview ; he dismissed the cardinal, and desired Boisenvall to be called.

He was a man of subaltern degree, very intriguing, of extreme activity, and long possessed of the royal confidence in every thing the king wished to effect unknown to the cardinal and his favourites in power. Every one knew that the favourites hated him. The cardinal exhibited much of disdain towards him, and the fa-

voir of Boisenvall was only the more firmly secured.

On the other side, Boisenvall, in his secret interviews with Louis, displayed the greatest animosity against Richelieu, but he spoke it only of his private character and his heart. He never attacked the man of the state ; on the contrary, he even acknowledged, with an air of pique and of vexation, that he held *Europe in his hand* ; he praised him to excess with infinite art and in common language mingled abuse which signified nothing : these eulogiums were not suspected, or at least appeared to be so, and the king had the good-nature to see only detraction in this discourse. The art of lacerating and of blackening, while appearing to praise is much in use at court, but it deceives there less than elsewhere ; but the reserved art of praising in avowing a contrary intention, is there much less necessary and less common ; it requires lively manners, blunt, and often rough or rude ones, and at the same time a fine acute spirit which renders its execution very difficult.

Boisenvall possessed it perfectly, he had received some lessons from a great master, and this master was Richelieu, to whom he was entirely sold ; and without any person in the least suspecting it.*

Louis charged Boisenvall to watch Mademoiselle de la Fayette and Saint-Ibal, and endeavour to discover if it were true that they held a correspondence in writing. Boisenvall, by the order of Richelieu, had already been very active on this occasion, and he had contrived to intercept a letter of Saint-Ibal, addressed to Ma-

* Historical.

demoiselle de la Fayette, and which he gave to Richelieu; the latter opened the letter, and found its contents as follows:

"Is it agreed, mademoiselle, that I am a troublesome third person, that last night I arrived too soon, and that you have found me very importunate? Your sentiments for the person who loves you with so much passion, will not allow you to dissemble what you think. You have both received me as two lovers would welcome an old very suspicious tutor who came to interrupt a passionate interview. This is quite natural, and I do not complain of it; I simply promise you to be more discreet in future. I take the liberty of writing to you, mademoiselle, only to tell you that I have executed your orders; your commission is performed, and with all the zeal that you have a right to expect from my respect and devotedness.

"SAINT-IBAL."

The cardinal, after having read this letter, did not doubt of the perfect understanding between Mademoiselle de la Fayette and the count de Soissons; certain of having in his possession what would ruin this haughty woman, he had spoken to the king, as has been already related.

When Boisenval had given him an account of the commission with which the king had entrusted him, he told him to let some days pass; and immediately Boisenval, by his order, begged the king to procure some writing of Saint-Ibal and of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. "For if I happen," said he, "to seize any of their letters, your majesty must be fully convinced that they are indeed in their hand-writing; since if

no doubts can remain of the intrigue Mademoiselle de la Fayette must be conceived the perfection of hypocrisy and deceit, of which I believe that the cardinal is alone capable."

"You are a good man, Boisensval," said the king; "you have no idea of the arts of which women are capable."

"That is true, sire; but I can well see through all the stratagems of his eminence. The study in which I have so long been engaged ought to have initiated my mind. For example:—I observe that he has penetrated the sentiments of your majesty for Mademoiselle de la Fayette, that he is in consequence jealous, and that he would be delighted at her disgrace."

"Yes I am aware of it; he has always thwarted my affections."

"They say he has great talents; deeds the most diabolical cost him nothing, for he has a heart of rock; and I should not be astonished if he had calumniated this poor Mademoiselle de la Fayette."

"Ah! would to Heaven!—Since the day that I spoke to you, nothing had been discovered?"

"No sire—at least not with certainty; and it is with certainty only that I would wish to speak."

"You have been told something——?"

"Mere idle rumour. Some say.—And yet who knows if it may not be only the cardinal himself who spreads these tales?"

"But what tales?"

"We are assured that the marchioness de Beaumont has not been ill; that it was a feigned malady to favour certain assignations.—'Madame de Beaumnot' could she be capable of playing so vile a part?" was my reply. But she

is without fortune—she is in debt. Monsieur le comte de Soissons is munificent and generous !”

“This is too scandalous ; I cannot believe it.”

“Neither can I. Others assert that Madame de Beaumont is not in the confidence of the parties, that her illness has only served as a convenient pretence for Mademoiselle de la Fayette to lengthen her stay at Paris, and that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had merely received the prince in her own house.”

“The family mansion of the countess de Brégi, which she has inherited ?”

“Yes, sire.”

“But she ought to sell this house, as she has another so much better at Vincennes.”

“She wished to sell that at Paris ; the agreement was almost formed, and then suddenly broken off.”

“That is singular indeed ! You are sure of it ?”

“Oh ! yes, sire ; and behold another fact. She passes nearly every evening in this house ; she remains there at least two hours : no one during that time is allowed to enter, except a single individual, a man wrapped up in a great cloak ! At the expiration of two hours, this man departs ; a moment after, Mademoiselle de la Fayette returns to her friend, and passes the remainder of the evening with her, and then retires to her chamber in her house. This is what has been her custom for the last five days.”

“Boisenval, are you certain of this ?”

“Sire, I have seen it myself yesterday, and the day before ; but yet it is possible that this individual may not be the count de Soissons.”

“Go again this evening ; conceal yourself opposite to her house, and come at three o'clock tomorrow to speak to me.”

This conversation plunged the king into the most grievous anxiety : all that the cardinal had said to him he had suspected ; but the communication of Boisenval was so *naïf*, it displayed so much of good nature, that it took effect, and made much impression in his naturally distrustful disposition. He shut himself up ; he could not sleep—he delivered himself over to ideas the most melancholy, and in this state awaited the return of Boisenval.

The next day, at the appointed hour, Boisenval arrived.

“Well ?” cried the king, the moment he appeared.

“Sire,” said Boisenval, “I yesterday, in the evening, witnessed exactly the same as before. Mademoiselle de la Fayette entered her house at the decline of day, and a quarter of an hour after, a man on foot, enveloped in a great cloak, slipped in mysteriously after her. But,” he continued, “I bring a more positive proof ; it is a letter of Saint-Ibal, which I have contrived to intercept.”

“Addressed to Mademoiselle de la Fayette ?”

“Yes, sire ; I am ignorant of its contents :—behold it.”

“I know the writing of Saint-Ibal ; give it to me.”

At these words, Louis took the letter, very adroitly re-sealed ; he opened it trembling, and after having read it with shuddering emotion, he exclaimed, “Perfidious woman ! with a figure so celestial ! an air so noble and full of candour ! Ah ! what deceit !—Listen, Boisenval ; hear this sentence.—‘*Your sentiments for the person who loves you with so much passion !*’ And again :—‘*You have both received me as two lovers would welcome an old tutor, very suspicious, who came suddenly to interrupt a passionate interview !*’ Can there now remain a doubt ?”

"Ah! indeed it is not Saint-Ibal who is her lover; it is now proved that he is not the confidant of these clandestine loves, and that the man in the cloak is certainly the prince."

"Shameless girl, and truly perverse! after the confidence that I have shown her, to deceive me thus!"

"But, sire, we know that the sentiments of your majesty had never passed the bounds of friendship the most chaste and correct."

And can I feel such a sentiment towards a woman capable of forming and cementing a criminal intrigue?"

"Your majesty is unacquainted with love; it will lure into errors."

"Ah! I am indeed unhappy! Yes, I would be even in my grave. All I love is torn from me! Death has deprived me of the constable of Luynes*; I have been compelled to separate from my mother; Mademoiselle de Hautefort betrayed my secrets—at least I would estimate her manners; but the last—I have admired nothing as I have done her, and now I must despise her! Tell me, Boisenvil, are they privately married? I cannot believe that a person so modest and so pious should have a lover under other circumstances. Are they married?"

* Charles d'Albert, duc de Luynes, born in 1578 of an ancient house, was a page and gentleman in waiting to Louis XIII. After having been the favourite of the king, and enjoying the highest offices in the kingdom, he died in 1621, hated by the people and not regretted by his fickle monarch. He was indebted to the charity of two obscure individuals for a shroud. In this instance, therefore our ingenious author is perhaps not "historical," when she represents Louis as grieving for the loss of de Luynes.

"Yes, sire, they have completed a marriage of conscience ; they both love to desperation."

"What insolence ! A prince of the blood presume to dispose of his faith—of his hand, without my permission ! This marriage is void."

"Yes, but it assures to them the happiness of living without compunction. The cardinal knows it, I am convinced."

"That is very possible, for he knows every thing."

"They have, perhaps, had his tacit consent : they think that quite sufficient. I am accounted as nothing ! No, no, I have not yet quite descended from my throne ; I will remount it with *eclat*, if only for a single day, to punish them, and then I will complete my melancholy destiny—I will purchase death by grief and tears !"

In speaking thus, this unhappy prince shed a torrent of tears.

"Live, sire," replied Boisenvil : "live for the happiness of France, and of those faithful subjects who are devoted to you."

"No," cried the king ; "nothing can longer attach me to life. Ruled by an insolent minister, who is useful to France, and too just myself to deprive the state of a necessary support—too proud to bow without suffering, under his authority—what to me is this high rank, this vain title ? Without power, without honour, which imposes upon me mortal constraints and duties I cannot fulfil, I derive from the past only regrets, the present brings only distracting pangs, and I behold in the future only *ennui* and the greatest discouragement. Friendship alone had power to re-animate this sunken heart. I have loved nothing as I did her, and with what respect ! I never have dared to write to her a note, a single line.

Boisenval, I must confess it, I can now, I do despise her—I hate her ! But I was myself astonished at the sentiment that she inspired in me, a sentiment too ardent perhaps. Heaven has punished me for it. I must no longer think of her :—I will, at least, show that I am her master. Boisenval, I will go this evening with you to Paris ; there you shall know my design.”

“ What, sire ? ”

“ Yes, I wish to surprize, to confound them, and to pronounce myself, upon them, the verdict of their separation, and of their exile.”

Boisenval, in giving an account of the result of his discoveries as a spy, had invented nothing ; it was very true that he had seen, three successive evenings, a man mysteriously enter the house of Mademoiselle de la Fayette ; but he feared, that if any obstacle should interrupt the assignation, that the king would doubt his veracity. Thus he combated with sincerity the resolution of the king, but it was without effect. Louis, altered from his general character by love and the deepest resentment, was not to be appeased ; but one hour after, and he learned that Mademoiselle de la Fayette was on her return to Saint Germain.

The king was in despair, for he burned with a desire of revenge ; he delayed the execution of his project to the first journey that Mademoiselle should take to Paris ; he resolved till then to dissemble.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette, happy in having left her friend in good health, returned with the sweet and soothing idea that she should find the king more tender than ever. No inquietude checked her joy—sensible and generous hearts are always confiding : she feared neither the resentment of the cardinal, nor that an absence of

three weeks had been able to alter him who so deeply interested her. The king loved her—what had she to dread from intrigues of the court, and the power of Richelieu? She believed herself certain of seeing the king the following day, and yet at the morning and the evening circle of the queen, he was alike invisible, and also on the subsequent day.

Without engendering any suspicion, Mademoiselle de la Fayette was afflicted; she imagined that Louis suffered as much as herself, but that he must have some reason for not coming that she could not divine.

On his side, the king, a thousand times more agitated, could not resist, at the end of two days, a violent desire to brave that which overturned his reason, and which destroyed his repose.

While delaying, he mentally said, "To confound and punish her I wish, at least, to humiliate her publicly."

At length Louis, one morning, came to the apartment of the queen. Mademoiselle de la Fayette was not yet in that of the maids of honour; she arrived a minute after the king had crossed it, and she waited with extreme emotion for the time when he would quit the chamber of the queen. With eyes fixed on the door, she expected each moment to see it open.

At last the king appeared. Certain that his first glance would be to seek her, she lifted up towards him her softened gaze, and shuddered at seeing his alarming paleness, his unsteady carriage, and his dejected air.

"Alas!" she mentally said, "he has been ill, and he has made a secret of it to conceal it from me. Oh! that he knew me better."

The king slowly advanced; he saw Mademoi-

selle without appearing to survey her. He stopped near Mademoiselle du Fargis, one of the maids of honour ; he spoke to her with mingled distraction and affability. During this time, he rested his hand on the back of a chair, for he could not support himself, and it was obvious his limbs trembled.

At last, still more overcome, he passed before Mademoiselle de la Fayette, whom the shock of agitation had rendered immoveable; he turned his head on one side, he cast upon her a sorrowful look, and wished to pursue his way out of the room ; but it required a strong effort to do this. Arrived near the door, he found himself ill, he seized hold of the key for support, his head fell on his shoulder, his eyes closed, his knees were seen to bend under him.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette darted forward, she sustained him ; Louis opened languidly his humid eyes, and he shuddered in finding himself in her arms.

He repulsed her, saying in a low voice, "*Leave me—it is you who kill me !*"

Mademoiselle de la Fayette dismayed, threw herself into a chair, called her companions and disappeared.

Trembling, beside herself, she remained in the anti-chamber, her ear rivetted on the door, she heard that the king was revived, that he spoke, that he prevented the queen being called ; that he rose, that he walked, and that he was about to turn the lock—then, with the promptitude of lightning, she fled, and without daring to cast a look behind her.

When she was in her own chamber she gave a free indulgence to tears. "Great God !" she exclaimed, "what has then happened ? he has re-

pulsed me, he has told me, *it is you who kill me !* incomprehensible words which resound yet upon my ear. It is I who kill him ! what have I done ? what does he believe ? Ah ! how wail he was—I thought he would have died ! He was in this state for me, he loves me then ; and a thousand times more than I could have imagined ! and yet he complains, he is violently irritated—It may then be my long residence in Paris ; having known that the Marchioness de Beaumont was out of danger more than eight days since, he thought that should have sooner made me return ; he is not aware that the marchioness, alone and suffering, had great need of me in the first moments of her convalescence, and that she required of me the sacrifice which has cost me so much ! But how can I speak to him, how explain to him my reasons ? In this perplexity, Mademoiselle de la Fayette resolved to write to the king without knowing how to make her letters reach him. She wrote for the remainder of the morning, she recommenced twenty times this letter, finding it alternately either too tender, or too dry, not being able to limit her expressions when she listened to her heart, or having nothing to say when she consulted reason ; at last she decided upon giving to the king a sincere explanation, and detailed the cause of her residence in Paris with a respectful and touching sentence upon the grief she had felt at having displeased him. She folded this letter in the form of a petition, determined to give it herself to the king if he came in the evening to the queen's apartment.

How very long the day appeared ! But in the evening she had the delight and joy of beholding the king appear. He looked not towards her, he did not approach her, but he spoke to no other

At the end of half an hour he made a movement to depart, Mademoiselle de la Fayette advanced towards him, took off her glove and presented to him her letter as a petition.

She performed this action with confidence and a striking dignity, and from that very reason which would have intimidated others. The world regarded her as a disgraced personage, and she wished at least to prove that she preserved that proper pride which arises from an irreproachable conscience. Louis was visibly agitated, but he received the paper and immediately retired.

The events of this day, the anger of the king, his grief, the open disgrace of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, furnished subject for all the conversation of Saint Germain ; the cardinal, informed of all by Boisenvall, triumphed ! His friend spread the news that Mademoiselle would be exiled the next day, and for ever

The queen, who much interested herself, questioned her with kindness when they met in that intimate circle which she honoured by the name of her society.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette replied that she was ignorant of the source of this storm, and that she had taken the liberty of writing to the king, conjuring him to tell her what she had done to displease him.

"Right," said the dutchess of Chevreuse, the king will grow calm, we are not so melancholy when we are implacable : the courtiers thought as the dutchess. The dejection of the king struck them much more than his anger, although even they did not suspect so ardent a sentiment. Thus Mademoiselle de la Fayette could not fail to perceive, that however disgraced, judging from the manner with which she was treated, an accommodation was not impossible.

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Nothing gives us confidence in such a situation so much as a good reception from some of the courtiers, and nothing renders us so sensible of fear, so alive to the dread of disgrace as appearance of the reverse among that description of persons. Mademoiselle was much less agitated than others. When we have written a long letter of explanation to him whom we love, we think that we are justified, and Mademoiselle de la Fayette had expected to see Louis thus impressed in the evening ; he however then appeared much more dejected than irritated, but this illusion was soon to vanish.

Upon retiring to her apartment at night, she received the reply of the king, the first letter that he had ever written to her. She opened it precipitately, and read these alarming words :

" You affect ignorance of the reason of my just resentment, and attribute it to causes the most frivolous. I could not be offended by such trifles—your justification is impossible ! Write to me no more. I will not receive your letters."

After concluding the perusal of this letter, Mademoiselle de la Fayette sank into a chair, and remained there petrified during more than half an hour ! At length arousing from this stupor, she read the fatal letter again. Each word pierced her very heart ; sensibility soon extinguished resentment, and then again anger overcome her grief. " Behold then," she exclaimed. " the first lines that I have received from his had ! behold the reward of an attachment as pure as tender ! He says, '*Write to me no more,*' no, he shall no more hear of me ; I will spare him the pain of banishing me from this tumultuous court—Tomorrow at the dawn of day I will set out. Those who have calumniated me have persuaded him

that my '*justification is impossible.*' I know that an explanation in a quarter of an hour would suffice to dissuade him : yet I will not ask it—I disdain it. Unhappy prince ! unfortunately the sport of intriguing minds ! You accuse me, you disown me, you exile me ; you may do so, but I can do more, I will be silent—and I abandon you. Alas ! you are sensible it is you, it is you alone who would feel your own heart proscribed !”

Saying this, her tears flowed with rapidity, but soon rallying her pride she effaced the tears from her cheeks, she called her woman, gave every order for her departure, and then retired to bed, if not with tranquility, at least with that kind of fortitude which is its substitute, and which inspires always in elevated minds a just sense of indignation. But sleep—how can a deeply-wounded spirit deliver itself up to that ?—how banish those ruling thoughts, which in great afflictions remain immoveable in the imagination, and entirely occupy it in the depths of the profound silence of night ? This thought, which was as a sharp steel plunged into her heart, seemed to twine around every sense, to lacerate them !—Mademoiselle de la Fayette repeated without ceasing, '*he has renounced me !*' In vain her heavy eyelids closed ; if a happy forgetfulness for an instant allayed her sufferings, she was soon awakened with an agonizing convulsion, crying out, '*he has renounced me !*'

As soon as day appeared, an attendant entered her chamber : she arose, dressed herself in haste, and set out.

Arrived at Paris, she flew to the Marchioness de Beaumont, and gave her an account of all that had happened.

“Such,” said she, “are the fruits of your con-

versation with the cardinal; this vindictive man has avenged himself by calumniating you, and certainly with infinite and artful dexterity."

"Ah!" replied Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "I pardon the king his suspicion and his credulity, he is full of candour, he has been a thousand times abused, and he who deceives him is consummate in art! but he *renonces me* without wishing to hear my defence, without even evincing the desire of confounding me; he has taken his measures—he is alienated from me; he says this in his letter, and it is this I cannot forgive! He is incapable of feeling love, his friendship is as weak as his love—it is thus that a faithless mistress might have been dismissed; but a friend! to whom an entire confidence had been pledged! This is too much!"

"I will go to Saint Germain," said the marchioness, "I will require an audience."

"He will refuse it, he no longer wishes to hear of me; when such a resolution can be taken in so short a time, it is impossible to have loved!"

"Yet he fainted upon again seeing you!"—

"And the next day banished me for ever!"

"Mademoiselle de Hauterfort was exiled, but you are not yet."

"And this letter, this cruel letter, is it not a hundred times more overwhelming than even a letter of exile? Is it not a positive order to distance myself eternally? No—he has done all this and I will never see him more! What chimeras! I must renounce! I shall suffer long, I shall always regret it, but I shall take no step to endeavour to regain his favour; I will not return during life to the court, and if your friendship should find the means of convincing him of the error of his judgment, and making him acknowledge his

own injustice, I will not avail myself of it: such is my irrevocable resolution."

Madame de Beaumont, although certain that her friend spoke with sincerity, yet also knew that we sometimes forgive, when we so deeply regret; but she judiciously appeared to enter into the sentiments of Mademoiselle de la Fayette: she would have combated them in vain in the first moments of anger and of grief.

While Mademoiselle de la Fayette thus poured forth her sorrows into the bosom of friendship; Louis, who had caused all her steps to be watched by Boisenvall, learned that she had repaired to Paris, and that she had carried with her all her trunks, this made him conclude that she proposed a long residence in Paris.

The king had at the same time been informed that the count de Soissons had also set out at midnight.

"And I also," said he, "I will depart this evening, they shall see me!"

In fact a little before dark he set off secretly and *incog*, attended only by Boisenvall, in a small vehicle, and repaired to Paris. He left this carriage at the entrance of its suburbs, followed only by Boisenvall: he went into the street in which was the house of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; he was wrapped up in a great cloak, and he had upon his head a hat turned down which almost entirely concealed his face. The day closed—the king promenaded half a quarter of an hour in the street; at the end of that time he saw Mademoiselle de la Fayette arrive, and some minutes after the man in the brown cloak, who knocked gently at the door, and was at the next moment let into the house.

The king, absolutely furious, darted towards

the house; he knocked violently—an old porter half opened one of the folding gates, Louis and Boisenval passed through; the porter was surprised and alarmed.

“I am the king,” said Louis, “conduct me without noise to the apartment where your mistress is: you, Boisenval, follow me, to bring hither this man.”

The porter tremblingly obeyed, he had recognized the king, who, in crossing the court-yard, ordered him to avoid the anti-chambers in which the domestics were; he was shown up a little private staircase and passed through a long gallery; at the end of it he entered a large apartment, when the porter showed him a folding door which was its very extremity.

“There,” said he, “is the gallery where my mistress is.”

“It is enough,” said the king, in a low voice, “return to your station: Boisenval, follow him.”

When the king was quite alone, he heard, with surprise, a confused noise, as formed by the voices of many children. He advanced gently towards the door of this room, in which Mademoiselle de la Fayette was enclosed; he knew that these voices must come from thence. Always wrapped up in his riding cloak, and his hat flapped over his eyes he partially opened the door.

What a sight was there presented to his view! He beheld Mademoiselle de la Fayette seated at the side of the venerable Saint Vincent, and surrounded by twelve children who had been bequeathed to her by her aunt, and who repeated successively aloud the rudiments of Christianity!

What a sudden light did it throw upon the recent affair—what a justification! Louis would

involuntarily have prostrated himself before her, but he was forced to constrain his wishes ; he suddenly shut the door ; he had seen Mademoiselle de la Fayette start ; he thought that she had recognized him. He was not deceived.

He perceived on his left a boudoir open, he entered it ; he found there a little table before a canopied couch, on which two lights were placed. He threw himself beneath this canopy, and a stream of tears bathed his cheeks ! However Mademoiselle de la Fayette was not yet entirely justified ; the letter of Saint-Ibal still testified against her, but what Louis had just seen had removed the film of prejudice from his eyes, had re-opened his heart to the sweetest confidence.

"This letter has but an equivocal sense," he began to think ; "I am sure it is so.

As he said this to himself, he heard the voice of Mademoiselle de la Fayette who was taking leave of her respectable friend : in another moment she entered into the next room, and seeing the king, who had taken off his hat—

"Ah !" she exclaimed, "it is then no illusion—what, sire ! do I indeed once more behold you ?"

"First," said Louis, "I ought to confess to you all my crime. I have intercepted a letter which was addressed to you ; read it, it is only an explanation of this that I ask, every thing else is already clear to me ; in restoring you this note, it is only with the desire of making this avowal."

Mademoiselle de la Fayette took the note, she smiled upon reading it, and said—

"Saint-Ibal refers to the friendship of Madame de Beaumont for me ; a sentiment which he styles a passion."

"Ah, without doubt," replied Louis, "a friend-

ship, perhaps sufficiently lively to merit that name?"

"But what interpretation then did your majesty give to this letter?"

"The count de Soissons adores you, I was assured that you loved him."

"And you have believed it?"

Saying these words Mademoiselle de la Fayette rose, walked some steps away, opened a press, and drew thence a little casket without a lock, and gave it to the king, saying—

"Sire, this casket contains six letters from the count de Soissons, they are the only ones I have received, the last is dated the day before yesterday ; I implore your majesty to read it, you will see in it only the expressions of a very passionate and respectful attachment wholly destitute of hope, to which I have not only never replied by writing, but even these letters have been received by stratagem, which did not admit the possibility of divining whence they came."

The king read the letter, and then could no longer restrain the most ardent sentiment and individual passion that he had ever felt throughout his life ! he fell upon his knees before Mademoiselle de la Fayette, as he exclaimed, "Oh, how culpable am I !"

"Great God !" returned Mademoiselle de la Fayette, extending her hand to assist him to rise ; "what are you doing ?"

"I implore forgiveness—pardon—in seeing you I have forgotten all, even my own sufferings !"

"You are not fully acquainted with the extent of my injustice, I will conceal nothing from you however painful the confession may be, it is only a weak expiation of a lamentable blindness."

"Ah ! I was not forgotten ; you have con-

descended to come hither in search of me ! can I after that maintain the slightest resentment ?”

“While I was accusing and calumniating you, you were occupied with the tenderest and most pious cares. And I have passed some days without admiring you ! Oh, that I could obliterate from my life those dreadful days which have left eternal remorse !”

Louis expressed himself with that ardour and sensibility which produced as much of emotion as astonishment and tenderness in Mademoiselle de la Fayette : she gently disengaged her hand which Louis had costantly retained within his.

“I implore your majesty,” she said, “to be quite assured that for the future I will never practise dissimulation for a moment with you. I am unacquainted with love, I believe friendship sufficient for my happiness ; but if ever hereafter I could resolve to form an engagement, you shall know it before the object of this new sentiment himself.”

This prudent discourse was not unintentional, it informed Louis that he had no right to be jealous of a legitimate attachment ; it reassured a conscience which began secretly to take alarm.

Louis sighed, a cloud of grief overspread his countenance ; “I understand you,” said he, “you have formed the intention of marrying at some future day.”

“No, sire, for marriage I have an aversion that I believe invincible.”

“Can it really be so ?—Reflect that you could not marry without separating yourself from me, without severing the knot which unites us ; this knot, formed in sincerest confidence, and which constitutes my sum of felicity !—What would

MADemoISELLE

then become of me without indemnification, without consolation ; abandoned by the one being alone whom I could adore, and whose counsels are so essential to me ?”

“Well then, sire,” interrupted Mademoiselle de la Fayette, “I resign to you my future life, and that is to devote it to virtue ! It is a matter of indifference to me to know what may be the events of it ; it is sufficient that I know it will appertain to you, and that you will dispose of it, certain of finding in you an enlightened guide, a judge as severe as my own conscience, and finally an august and revered master, who will, in truth, be to me the image of the Divinity on earth, whose orders and inspirations can only strengthen and establish me in the sacred paths of duty !”

“And I,” exclaimed Louis, with enthusiasm ; “I pledge you confidence without bound, a friendship unequalled ; I swear to follow your every counsel. Your angelic soul will elevate and animate mine ; he whom you wish for a guide and for a master, is desirous to reign that he may by glory ennoble the cherished titles which constitute his happiness.”

At these words, Mademoiselle de la Fayette transported with purest delight, replied only by tears, with which Louis mingled his. He had never before felt similarly affected : it seemed to him that he received the supernatural gift of a new existence ; he conceived himself suddenly transformed—he was indeed so at this moment.

It is thus that love, under a specious imposing form, entwines and deludes two virtuous hearts which he could never seduce, were he to shew himself in his real character.

It was necessary to separate, and also to main-

tain the most profound silence respecting this interview. Mademoiselle de la Fayette promised to return the next day to Saint Germain.

The king upon quitting the house, gave fifty louis-d'ors to the porter, recommending him to be silent.

Boisenval knew every thing through the porter, and he recognized the pious Vincent in him whom he had so long in the dark taken for the count de Soissons.

The porter had related that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had received under her care twelve orphans consigned to her protection by the countess de Brégi, on her death bed. Thus he was not surprized at the enlivened air of the king, and he appeared to partake both his joy and his vivid admiration.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette, after the departure of the king, remained more than three hours, in her little boudoir, yielding to the innocent gratification of recalling this delightful conversation.

The king, believing her culpable, had still wished to hear her; notwithstanding his natural timidity, and his aversion for all extraordinary and uncommon actions, he had come *incog* to seek her at Paris.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette traced, in this single step, the certain indications of a character replete with energy and the most acute sensibility; and the king had solemnly sworn to follow her advice, and live hereafter for glory.

Wrapt in the most seducing hopes, Mademoiselle de la Fayette remained only a few hours in bed; she arose with the sun and dressed herself with haste, impatient to seek her friend, and to talk all day of the king.

At the moment when she was sallying forth,

Boisenval was announced, who advancing respectfully, delivered a letter from the king (4.) She opened it and hastily read these lines.

"I wish to contribute to your good actions. How well I love these orphans whom I have seen assembled around you! I give to each of these children a pension for life of one thousand francs. It is gratifying to me to think that henceforth they will unite my remembrance with that of their benefactress!

"To partake all your sentiments, to see only through your eyes, to act only as you advise, to live only for you—such are my vows, my projects, and the sole destiny which can render me happy!"

This letter pictured at once much of love and the character of Louis. This prince did love, and he renounced his own will to submit himself to those of the object of his affections; he asked only in return for chains. This was the language of a passionate lover; it was not that of a king. Mademoiselle de la Fayette saw in this letter only the touching expression of a most tender sentiment, and an engagement to follow the noblest counsels. She did not consider that he who could thus deliver himself up voluntarily, and without restriction, to dependance upon her, would never have resolution to throw off that upon a man the most artful and the most skillful. She replied immediately, and never was gratitude expressed with more energy and sensibility.

As soon as Boisenval had quitted her, she flew to the house of her friend, who partook her joy. Mademoiselle de la Fayette praised with as much warmth as sincerity, the spirit, the soul and the sentiments of Louis.

"How very happy I am," said she, "yet not-

withstanding my present happiness, it is upon the future that my imagination reposes most delightfully, it is to that my heart attaches itself, and to that all my thoughts incline. I already see in perspective the king reign with *éclat*, with glory ! I see him hereafter cherished, admired.—Ah ! could it be possible he should not be loved by his subjects ! when he will become accessible, when it will be he who distributes rewards and recompenses, when they experience his goodness, his generosity, they will adore him ! My first care shall be to draw him towards the queen, I confess I shall not tranquilly enjoy his friendship until I see him towards the queen such as he ought to be.”

“This re-union is a matter of importance, it will in itself be sufficient to render the king beloved : the people expect from their rulers the example of domestic virtues ; besides, France has for a long time been desirous of an heir to the throne. She no longer expects it, but if you could re-establish the conjugal connexion between the king and queen, what service you would render to the state ! But nothing is more difficult ; the queen is ill-advised, the king is irritated and hurt ; the cardinal always mortally dreading the ascendancy that a wife may gain, carefully heightens the old resentments of the king, and by a thousand little informations, furnishes him each day with new subjects for discontent ; the queen has not committed any imprudence, she has not allowed herself to ridicule or pass a light reflection on the character and the conduct of the king, which could be repeated to him.

“Unfortunate as amiable prince, every thing conspires against you !”

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"You will be his titular genius; you will restore peace to a wounded heart, you will reanimate some stifled sentiments, some tender affections, which will constitute his happiness."

"Yes, virtue, and an unalterable purity have preserved in this dejected heart the happy germ of every generous passion; it could only be lacerated, closed from them, but not wholly faded; it shall re-open completely to the voice of reason and of friendship. Alas! he asks, he calls for truth—he shall know it, I will restore him to all his duties. Ah! how I wish those days of glory and of happiness were arrived, when I shall see this generous and feeling prince the idol of his subjects, and the model for all great monarchs; when I shall say to myself, history can speak of him only with admiration."

Mademoiselle de la Fayette prolonged this conversation even to the dinner hour. Upon rising from table, she sat out for Saint Germain.

How delicious was the sentiment with which her soul was filled, in preceiving from a distance, that majestic forest, that beautiful terrace, that ancient chateau from which she had the evening before believed herself for ever banished!

The road that she traversed, the fields, the trees, the most simple objects had for her a charm similar to that of novelty, and awakened interest by the most touching remembrance.

Yesterday the victim of calumny, dejected, desperate, she had fled; to-day she returns triumphantly—she was going to see Louis, and to find him happy.

A little before the entrance into Saint Germain, she perceived a female holding two little infants in her arms, and begging alms: naturally compassionate and generous, she was still

more so at this moment ; she is always well disposed and tender who is perfectly contented with him she loves. She had her carriage stopped.

"Poor woman !" she said, "I would have this day to thee also a day of happiness."

She gave to this female all the money she had in her purse, and asked her address, promising that she would go to see her the next morning.

"My God, madame !" said the poor woman, "I dwell with my mother and my grandfather, in a cottage quite a ruin, a very little way from this."

"It matters not ; I will be with you at seven o'clock. You are young—can you then find no work ?"

"No, madame. My husband has been dead these six weeks ; he was industrious, and supported us : his illness had made us expend and sell the little that we had ; his death has left us in the depths of distress ! I am left a widow with these twin-babies, whom I nurse, and charged with a paretic mother and a very infirm old grandfather. All that I can do is to gather some herbs in the forest, and collect some pieces of dry wood. In this miserable state I am compelled to beg my bread ; it is right I should do so, since it is also that which is to support my parents and my poor little ones."

"You shall beg no more," exclaimed Mademoiselle de la Fayette ; "you shall have a happy, honourable existence ! To-morrow, at seven o'clock, I will be at your cottage."

"Ah, my good lady ! Heaven will recompense you ! I will pray to God for you all the days of my life !"

"Pray also for the king ; if he knew of your situation he would send you some relief—be sure of that."

"He hunts to-day; my grandfather has been in the forest in the hope of finding him in his way, and of being able to present to him a petition."

"If he should find him, he will return consoled.—Adieu, my dear friend, till to-morrow."

The first care of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, on arriving at Saint Germain, was to send into the town to purchase some linen, some villagers, dresses for men and women, and also child-bed linen.

The next day, followed only by an old *valet de chambre*, she stole out from the chateau, and went on foot to the cottage, which she reached by half-past eight.

The poor woman waited her arrival on the step of the door. As soon as she perceived Mademoiselle de la Fayette, she ran to her precipitately, exclaiming,

"Ah! my dear lady, all our happiness has come at once! Yesterday my grandfather gave his petition to the king, who read it and gave him two louis. But this is not all—this morning, within a quarter of an hour, as my grandfather was going out to purchase some provisions, a lord came from the king to bring us six hundred livres, and to tell us, that besides this, his majesty would have our house repaired, and join to it a garden, and give us a cow and some hens! I have related to the good gentleman," continued the woman, "how I met you yesterday. He has been quite curious to know who you are. I told him! was not acquainted with your name. Has she not," said he, "large black eyes, and a small mouth? Is she not very fair, with a brilliant colour?" I said yes to all, for he fancied quite right. He wishes to see you; he waits expecting you in our cottage."

This recital, uttered with extreme volubility, made the heart of Mademoiselle palpitate. She gave to the countryman the large packet that her valet de chambre carried; she ordered the latter to wait for her without the door, and she entered into the cottage.

After having passed through a very little room fallen into ruins, she entered a kind of impaired kitchen, where she saw the king seated on a wooden stool, at the side of the cradle of the twin-babies, which he gently rocked!

Mademoiselle de la Fayette paused; a few sweet tears coursed down her cheeks. The king started; he placed one finger on his lips to caution her not to betray him, for the peasant was behind her; then rising, he said,

"I have divined right!

"What!" replied Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "it is the same thought and the same sentiment which re-unites us here."

"Ah! do you not know," replied Louis, "that I can have no others now, and that the word *sympathy* can only imperfectly express the intimate union of two souls who may be more truly said to form but one. Thus" he continued, smiling, "I do not propose to partake between us both this good deed—whether it be you or I, is it not the same? As I have already given my orders to Boisenval for money, you must charge yourself only with properly employing it. Secure happiness to this good family, certain that all you may do from your own heart will be according to mine."

In finishing these words, pronounced with the most touching expression, the king quitted the cottage, and left Mademoiselle de la Fayette in an inexpressible transport of joy and admiration.

At the accustomed hour, Mademoiselle de la Fayette was at the queen's. It was in the last days of spring ; the wheather was hot and dry. Mademoiselle de la Fayette opened a window, and seated herself upon a large balcony. The king, after having paid his short visit to the queen, seated himself at the side of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

They both enjoyed happiness in finding themselves in some measure out of the chamber, though in sight of the maids of honour placed *vis-à-vis* to them at the opposite extremity of the apartment : but they turned away from them ; they saw only heaven, the verdure, and the trees—they could not be overheard, and they had all the illusion of a *tête-à-tête*.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette, after having expressed all those feelings the scene of the morning had inspired, lost no time in speaking of the queen.

She was listened to coldly at first, but afterwards Louis complained bitterly of the queen, and of the old ills and new grievances ; he cited much of light and indiscreet discourse which had escaped her within a few days.

"How, sire !" said Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "do you allow any one to presume to repeat to you such things ? Is not speaking ill of the queen failing in respect to yourself ? Besides, the intention cannot be doubted ; they wish to incense you against her ; and those who are capable of such a sentiment, are they not also of calumniating her ? Supposing even that those unworthy occupations were scrupulously exact, can any one give an account of the air and of the tone of the queen, or even of her design ? An innocent word said in pleasantry, and often in irony, may be per-

verted into a culpable and impertinent expression ; and reflect, sire, that every serious report which accuses without positive and incontestible *proof*, not only may be, but is probably false. What ought to be thought of a report of this kind, made against a spouse and a queen ? you, sire, who have much compassion, how could you forget that beautiful maxim of the holy writings ? ‘ *The prince who listens with a favourable ear to false reports, should only have the wicked for ministers.*’

“ Those who have told me, are very faithful ; I am sure of it.”

“ It is impossible that you can have had that incontestable proof, and still less that you should be assured of the veracity of these accusations, whilst there are accounts that aggravate and that justify !—In fact, were you not prejudiced against me, were you not persuaded that I was false, inconsistent, that I failed in principle and in honour ?”

“ Appearances have deceived those of good veracity.”

“ No, sire, you was told that all the world believed that I loved the count de Soissons, and that was untrue ; no one ever did entertain that idea. Falsehood always accompanies, more or less, accusations—the fear of its being discovered alone prevents the relators from carrying it further. A political prudence is, in this case, the sole check to impudence ; and therefore it is, a king should be informed of all that actually does happen.

“ Yes, doubtless, in things of importance ; for useful pieces of information are not accusations. But would you wish to know, sire, what is the public opinion passed upon yourself ? Judge yourself, and you will know it. Yes, sire, your great qualities and those happy gifts of nature that you

have received and hold in trust for the welfare of others, are objected against you as a crime. In fact, your piety does not preserve you from that indolence and inactivity which religion condemns in the meanest subject, and which she reprobrates in kings as a crime of the first magnitude. Your natural equity does not give you that vigilance which anticipates injustice, nor that courage to redress it. Your sensibility will be to you only a ceaseless torment from perpetual distrust. You are humane, your character is full of gentleness and sweetness, yet there is little clemency or mercy under your reign. You have great military talents, nevertheless you do not yourself direct the movements of the campaign, nor do you decide as you ought upon the declaration or cessation of war. Heaven has bestowed on you fine personal attractions, and you conceal your own charms; you are savage, inaccessible. Your mind is one formed to render your conversation pleasing, to seduce, to fascinate, and yet you are wrapt in silence. It is not you, sire, who encourage letters; another is named as their patron."

"Behold, sire, this is what is said of your majesty, not in the circle of the queen, but every where else throughout your empire; and behold this, which spies and accusers have told you."

"At least add to the portrait, and I can listen to harsh truths not only without anger, but with gratitude."

"Ah! sire, I shall not say to you, that I obey your reiterated orders; but deign to think that in speaking thus to you I have a thousand times more merit than if I should make you the avowal of my own faults. A detail of your errors is to me the most painful of all confessions!"

At these words, Louis, much affected, raised his eyes to heaven.

"Yes," he replied, "I can appreciate this noble language of the heart and of true virtue. It attaches me as much as it enlightens me."

"Allow then, sire, that I venture also to speak to you of the queen."—

"The queen hates me!"

"No, sire, she is hurt and wounded by your conduct towards her, and she has reason to be so; but in her heart she loves you."

"Ah! I am very certain of the contrary, there is a mutual antipathy."

"There can exist actual antipathy only between vice and virtue.—The queen is pious, amiable, intelligent, vivacious: her soul is great, generous, incapable of harbouring resentment"

"What an eulogium! thus you then deem me very criminal?"

"I consider you on this head in error. To render justice to the queen, sire, nothing else is necessary than to know her better, and to judge her impartially yourself. You will be surprised at the pleasantness and even the solidity of her mind, at her very even temper, and a thousand good and rare qualities which render all those irresistably attached to her who are without prejudice and individual malice, and have the honour of being about her person. She is adored by the public, who will with transport see you near her. Lastly, the interest of the state demands it; there is no heir to the throne."

This long discourse, these eulogiums, unmingled by censure, and uttered with so much warmth, were suspected by Louis. He said nothing in reply, and became grave and abstracted. The distrust natural to his character, persuaded him that Mademoiselle de la Fayette, had imbibed for the

queen an attachment stronger than that she had formed for him, and that she spoke in league with her. From this idea he thought himself in some measure sacrificed. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, the confidant of the queen, acting only by her orders, was not for him that friend who had promised him a boundless confidence and devotion !

However he carefully concealed these reflections, and Mademoiselle de la Fayette did not suspect them. She thought only that the conversation had embarrassed him, and she dared not prolong it. The king spoke of other matters with a little abstraction, but without evincing the least displeasure. At the end of an hour and a half he withdrew.

This long conversation, this conspicuous restoration to favour, caused much commotion at Saint Germain ; those who had foreseen it, did not fail to recall to Mademoiselle de la Fayette that her disgrace had produced no influence on their sentiments for her. They thought that this conduct authorized flattery the most excessive, and they universally lavished it upon her. She rejected some, she received a great number, she believed that she had acquired many friends ; happily, notwithstanding her natural candour and ingenuousness, her reason and her rectitude preserved her from imprudence and indiscretion. The queen who expected from her that confidence which had displaced Mademoiselle de Hautefort, questioned her eagerly upon the subject of her reconciliation with the king, and upon all he had said to her in their long conversation. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who could without the slightest exaggeration have raised herself so much in the estimation of the queen, and taught her the value of such

a friend, yet maintained silence, and was impenetrable. This reserve deeply hurt the queen, who did not dissemble the excess of her displeasure, and who from this moment treated Mademoiselle de la Fayette with extreme coldness.

The dutches of Chevreuse and other favourites, were incensed at not being able to become initiated into some secrets, the knowledge of which might have opened a field for new intrigues ; the result was, that they exasperated the queen yet more. This afflicted Mademoiselle de la Fayette without diminishing the desire she felt to serve her. (5)

However the king, on his side, upon reflecting on all that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had said to him on the subject of the queen, was more and more confirmed in his first impression. Reasons to sanction their suspicions, and those the most specious, easily offer themselves to the minds of distrustful people ; it seems that the whole strength of their imaginations consists in misleading and deceiving their judgment with the greatest degree of probability ; a simple doubt becomes soon riveted in their mind, and they meditate on it, till it grows into conviction : it needs only this to bring forth and consign them to this unhappy trait of character, to that gloomy spirit which is always fertile in chimerical suppositions, ingenious in composing these with art, dreaming only of plots and stratagems, every successive reflection augmenting the danger of them.

The king absorbed in such melancholy reveries, and unwilling to confide the source of his new chagrin to any one, suddenly quitted Saint-Germain, and hastened to shut himself up at Versailles, which was then a hunting lodge, it was there that he always went when anxious to conceal his inquietude, to free him-

self from the attention and survey of his courtiers, and, above all, from the harassing, observant Richelieu.

The latter instructed by Boisenval of the perfect justification of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, sensibly felt what empire such a being could acquire over the king; but yet, notwithstanding the last precipitate flight of the king, at the moment of so tender a reconciliation, had at once acquainted him that new misunderstandings had arisen between him and Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

Boisenval could not give him any elucidation on this head; Louis, quite impenetrable, preserved an obstinate silence, and even sent away Boisenval to Saint Germain, with orders to remain there until his return. During this space of time, Mademoiselle de la Fayette enjoyed all that peaceful security which is the companion of an unsuspicious and artless heart; she was occupied with the delightful employment of re-establishing comfort and happiness in the family of the poor peasant of whom the king was the benefactor. With the tenderest, most affecting sensations, she re-visited that cottage where she had seen Louis rocking the cradle of the little twins, in that humble asylum whither a similar sentiment had drawn both at the same hour.

She had the house repaired and furnished; in particular, the old paralytic mother had a great easy-chair, some sheets, new curtains, and a good bed. She also placed some chests full of linen, some tables and some chairs.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette begged the wooden stool on which the king had sat, it was a precious memento to her that she wished always to preserve; she sent it to her country house at

Vincennes. The happiness of this family was completed by the purchase of a little meadow, and a piece of ground formed into an inner yard, and a garden.

Louis did not return from Versailles until the expiration of eight days ; he learned, with evident surprise, the marked coldness of the queen for Mademoiselle de la Fayette : the favourites of the queen were so indiscreet that the cause of this change in her majesty became known ; it was said, that Mademoiselle de la Fayette having been interrogated upon her interview with the king, had positively refused to reply.

At this intelligence, Louis, fluctuating between remorse and a lingering particle of suspicion, was not yet entirely freed from his first apprehension.

May it not be artifice ? Mademoiselle de la Fayette, in penetrating the source of his grief, had perhaps concerted this apparent misunderstanding with the queen ! But to suspect Mademoiselle de la Fayette, this angelic being, of such dissimulation !

To Louis, without doubt, that idea was very repugnant, but still his habitual suspicion counteracted his esteem and admiration, and he mentally said—

“ Ah, that I could be certain of being beloved ! that I could blindly believe it ! It is impossible that she can partake the sentiment with which she inspires me ; I see only her perfections, and she discovers all my faults ! With suasive sweetness of manner she details them, it is true, but with what actually inflexible severity at the same time ; and what an interesting portrait she has drawn of the queen ! If she thinks the queen so perfect, why should she not love her better than

me? No, she feels for me only gratitude and compassion, a degree of pity which is in fact only founded on contempt. In all she does, she is guided only by a sentiment of duty, and a wish for glory. No, she loves me not. I shall never find myself beloved, I am always deceived, betrayed. It is my fate to discover only ingrates in the objects of my most ardent affections!"

It was thus that this envenomed heart became a silent prey to anguish and discontent. He again saw Mademoiselle de la Fayette; he testified the same tenderness towards her, and, far from being affected by the tranquil state in which he saw her at the end of eight days, he only attributed this sweet calm to apathy.

On the morrow he went to hunt in the wood of Vincennes; the chase led him near to the house of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. Having asked to whom that house belonged, he felt an inclination to enter it; suspicion always engenders curiosity; a vague expectation of some unexpected event, and a desire, mingled with fear of discovering some important secret. Louis left all his suit in the wood—he entered alone into this edifice. The housekeeper shewed him every apartment. Passing by the right wing of the building, the housekeeper said, that, for some little time past twelve orphans had been established there, under the superintendence of six women, solely charged with the employment of taking care of them; and over the door of that corridor, where these children slept, Louis read these words, traced in golden letters:—

THROUGH THE BENEFACTION OF THE KING.

In crossing the saloon, the first object which struck his view was his own bust, with this inscription:

PIETY, JUSTICE, AND GOODNESS.

The king, already overcome with emotion, saw in an alcove the crucifix of lapis-lazuli, which the countess de Brégi had bequeathed to her niece, and two pictures, the one representing Saint Louis, the head of the Bourbons and patron of the king; and the other Saint Genevieve, protectress of France. Opposite the alcove was a seat of rustic form, with a covering ornamented with a superb silver fringe, and the arms of the king embroidered upon it in gold.

"What is this piece of furniture?" asked Louis.

The housekeeper smiled as she replied, "It is very ugly, but its covering is rich and beautiful; Mademoiselle values it so highly she has actually placed it in her chamber, and forbidden any one to touch it; without the express command of your majesty I should not dare to raise the cover."

"I will raise it myself, then;" and Louis uncovered the mysterious seat, recognizing at the same instant the wooden stool on which he had sat in the cottage.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette with her own hand, had written on the back,

ONE AND THE SAME THOUGHT!

The heart of Louis was deeply affected; he raised his eyes, filled with tears, and saw above the stool a picture which represented him seated at the side of the cradle, and rocking the two little infants. The principal figure was so placed as to avoid the couterance being seen; but he could not mistake himself.

The housekeeper preceding him, opened the

door of a study of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, saying, with a satisfied air—

“It is this which your majesty will find the most beautiful.”

The king followed her ; and after having gone some steps into this little room, and looked around, he felt so agitated, that he wished to be left some moments to himself ; he sent away the housekeeper, and threw himself into a chair, veiling his eyes bathed in tears, with both his hands.

This library was full of small pictures, painted to perfection, which represented remarkable events in the campaigns of the king. They were a series of drawings in which the king was depicted in the most brilliant moments of his life. Louis found himself surrounded by all his glory, which the tenderest of sentiments had wished to consecrate the memory of ; and he every moment retraced his own portrait.

At once confounded, transported, overwhelmed with remorse, intoxicated with gratitude and passion, Louis at length knew to what an extent he was beloved ! He had before this day admired Mademoiselle de la Fayette with enthusiasm ; but he had never felt the certain conviction of being himself passionately loved. No more of doubt, no more of suspicion, no more of fear—he knew her heart as well, perhaps better than she did herself !

“Ah, first day of my life !” he cried, “what a divine light is shed over my existence ! I am beloved, and for myself, in silence, in seclusion, in the deepest mystery ! When can I ever again doubt her sincerity—when can I accuse this heart so tender ; far from every eye, and even by myself unknown, she was occupied only with me !

Ah, may she ever be ignorant of the last injustice I have done her, more culpable a thousand times than all the rest ! I will fly to seek her, I feel as if I was about to see her for the first time ; she has never avowed to me those sentiments that I have here discovered :—Ah, that I could compel her to speak as she does in private :”

The king quite lost in love, arose ; recalled the housekeeper, hastily passed through the house, remounted his horse, and, without stopping a moment, bent his course back to Saint Germain.

He saw Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who marked in his manner much of fire and vivacity, but she was no longer surprised at it, when she was informed he had visited her house at Vincennes.

She blushed for the joy and delight of Louis ; his impassioned accent showed her fully all the importance he attached to this discovery ; she felt some vague scruples again arise from the depths of her heart, scruples that she had more than once before dispersed ; she constrained the tenderness of her own expressions ; she had never seen the king so familiar, so confident with her, he had never spoken to her with so much of energy and of unrestrained passion.

Intimidated, yet seduced, she ventured only a half reply, but she listened to him with delight. To calm her troubled conscience she again spoke of the queen ; Louis regarded her with tenderness.

“ Ah !” said he, “ when you ask, who can refuse you ? Ah ! without doubt you ought to love me, you who know me as I am ! If others admire you, if others adore so many charms united to so many virtues, what sentiments ought I not to feel !”

“ Ah, sire ! then prove to me this holy friend-

ship by fulfilling the sacred duties of a husband!"

"I will obey you."

"Permit me to ask one favour more, you can accord it to me at once."

"Command it."

"Recal Mademoiselle de Hautefort—restore her to the queen."

At this unexpected request, Louis astonished, remained for a moment without replying; at last he said in a voice of emotion—

"Who is there that could refrain admiring you in every thing? Yes, I can again see Mademoiselle de Hautefort, alike without anger and without danger. One object alone now engrosses my heart—the past is effaced from my memory; I have not with long reasoning dispersed all other remembrances, for one thought always present has banished them all from my imagination without leaving a trace behind! Oh, tell me no more of past crimes, of past faults, I did not then live, you have created me! Your tender affection can alone preserve that soul you have deigned to animate with so lively and so pure a flame. If you should abandon me, I should sink into nothing—with you I should be capable of executing all that you could inspire of the most elevated! I will return to the queen, I will announce to her the recal of Mademoiselle de Hautefort."

Saying this, the king rose and went to the queen, who was very much surprised at seeing him.

This princess had in her apartment the dutchess of Chevreuse, the marchioness of Senecé, her lady of honour, and the marchioness de Beaumont, who had returned from Paris that very day. The king asked the queen, after some light conversation, where Mademoiselle de Hautefort was, and then added with much address, that her absence had been sufficiently lengthened,

it would be proper to send her permission to return.

At these words astonishment was depicted upon every countenance, and the first sentiment of the queen was that of joy and gratitude.

Louis was seated at her side, leaning on the back of her chair, and inclining towards her as if he wished even to whisper privately : this soft familiar manner, his animated air, his smiling countenance, caused as much astonishment as the intelligence he came to announce ; all the ladies rose and retired from the apartment. Louis upon finding himself tête-à-tête with the queen for the first time after a great many years, experienced momentary embarrassment, but in reflecting for whom, and by whose desire he acted, he easily overcame this inward annoyance."

"I wish," said he, "that you should know the return of Mademoiselle de Hautefort has been requested by Mademoiselle de la Fayette."

These words wounded the pride of the queen, who replied, with bitter irony, "I am not surprised that you have accorded to Mademoiselle that which you have so often refused to me !"

"For above two years," returned Louis, "you have never spoken of her to me ; that subject, which formerly would have been painful to me is indifferent now ; there is nothing in this offensive to you."

"Yes," replied the queen, "I believe in truth that *now* you will see Mademoiselle de Hautefort with perfect indifference."

"Why ? friendship is not an exclusive sentiment."

"I could renew the friendship I had for Mademoiselle de Hautefort, without lessening that I have for Mademoiselle de la Fayette."

"Ah ! that is impossible."

"Then you think it is love ?"

The queen smiled, and was silent.

"You agree with me then ?" replied the king.

"Very well, why should you have so much favoured this inclination, why should you have always procured me with so much pleasure and complacency the opportunities of approaching Mademoiselle de Hautefort ? Why did you always treat her as your dearest friend, and why appear cold to and incensed against Mademoiselle de la Fayette ?"

These were pressing questions ; the queen was able to reply only by saying, that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had never been her friend, and that she had not changed towards her.

The king again resumed in a grave tone—

"I believe also that you do justice to my principles, to my honour, and that you think too wisely not to pay to Mademoiselle de la Fayette the just tribute of that praise which is due to her character, her understanding, and her general conduct."

"I esteem her, but I do not wish to have the appearance of being protected by her."

"In employing a word which can never be applicable to you, you reply neither with reason, nor with dignity, not even with justice, for I do not give you the appearance of being served by Mademoiselle de la Fayette, when I only repeat to you what she said to me. For the rest, I hope that in acknowledgment for an obliging act, I shall see you satisfied and grateful, and that I shall not witness only anger and discontent—it is a misfortune."

"I alone shall suffer from"—

"No, I wish to see you happy."

"Ah! if that were true, I should be so!"

"Have confidence in me, we will see each other to-morrow. I wish it to be a tête-à-tête meeting; perhaps we shall come to a better understanding."

These words, pronounced with the great charm of a sweet and tender manner, had a lively effect upon the queen. Louis did not wait her reply, he retired immediately.

The ladies re-appeared; the queen was agitated, but it was obvious that this emotion was excited by an agreeable sentiment. The queen, in this interview, had experienced a kind of revolution in her mind for which she could not account. She had till then only seen in the king a weak man, deceived and duped by his friends, incapable of inspiring a sincere attachment. Since her marriage, in her society they had spoken of him only to condemn or to turn him into ridicule.

Thus prepossessed and perpetually angered, she had scarcely remarked that he was handsome, very witty, and formed to please. However, the most beautiful woman, at least a being the most charming from the rare union of qualities, at once the most brilliant and the most solid, sincerely loved the king, and that without ambition—for himself alone.

This reflection had excited in the mind of the queen a degree of curiosity, a secret desire to examine the king, and in fact to know if it was possible to find him charming and attractive.

An examination made but superficially, had nevertheless left much of trouble, of tenderness, and inquietude. She did not speak of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, but she highly praised the king.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette must have been at the height of her wishes ; the king, a thousand times more affectionate and confiding than ever, suffered himself to be blindly led by her, and yet she was uneasy, restless, and agitated ; new scruples arose confusedly from the depth of conscience.

The innocence of her life, the purity of her heart and of her imagination could yet deceive her upon her own sentiments ; but she could not be entirely blinded to those of the king.

Delicacy and innate modesty in a female easily veil love even from the observation of him who inspires it ; but a man knows neither how to disguise nor to restrain a passionate sentiment.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette read it with delight in the heart of Louis, but at the same time she was alarmed at the passion she had discovered.

She passed every evening with Madame de Beaumont ; the latter congratulated her on her success, and on the extraordinary steps she had influenced the king to take. "You will obtain from him every thing," she said ; "you will indeed, make him a king—a great man ! He is already scarcely to be recognized, even in his exterior. His tone, his manner, even the expression of his countenance is altered ; he is more affable, he is less silent, he is more courteous and obliging. Proceed, you will change the destiny of France !"

Mademoiselle de la Fayette listened in silence to this flattering discourse.

Madame de Beaumont, surprised at her melancholy, put some questions to her, and Mademoiselle de la Fayette burst into tears.

"O heavens ! what ails you ?" cried Madame de Beaumont.

"Ah ! my friend," replied Mademoiselle de la Fayette, " without doubt I am loved ; I am perhaps too much so."

"Can you then mistake a friendship so pure for a culpable sentiment ? and shall this vain scruple make you renounce the glory of drawing this excellent prince from so long a lethargy ? What are your projects ? To restore a re-union with the queen, to inspire him with a taste for labour, exertion, and activity ; to free him from the tyranny of the cardinal, to render him accessible and clement.—You must consummate this great work."

"But to reduce his reason—to inspire a criminal passion !"

"Has he made you the avowal of such a passion ?"

"No ; but if every thing declares it ?"

"Is it not sufficient that you have nothing to reprehend in his language ? Besides, who could give limits to an attachment so well founded ? You never had a declaration of love, how can you recognize it ?"

"I know not ; but his looks embarrass me—the tone of his voice is no longer the same—the friendship that I have imbibed for him is the most lively and the most tender that could be felt, and I love with a composure that I do not witness in him—it is in fact he who now intimidates me. The sight of the queen involuntarily agitates me. I consider, that she is his wife. Ah ! it is his heart that I must restore !"

"That depends neither upon you, nor yet even upon the king."

"And if I am the obstacle ?"

"Who tells you so ? are you ignorant that they never did love ?"

"It is said so ; but how can I believe that his wife has never loved him ?"

"It is a fact then, and can you doubt if you were to give an account of your conversations with the king, she would not have favoured your connection all in her power ? She believed him in love with Mademoiselle de Hautefort, and she was delighted at it."

"Yes she does not love ! this idea consoles me. Besides, this word I ought never to hear, this culpable word he has never pronounced. My fears calumniate him, perhaps."

"Be assured of it."

"And friendship—is not that a passion when it is founded on admiration and a boundless confidence ?"

"It is true that I would surrender up my life for him, and that there are no sacrifices I could not make to him."

"Be re-assured, then, and pursue this noble work with tranquillity."

This conversation, without entirely freeing Mademoiselle de la Fayette from her scruples, restored composure for some time to her mind.

The marchioness de Beaumont was perfectly persuaded in her own mind, that Louis was deeply in love with her friend, and that the latter partook his sentiments. The marchioness had some principle, some generosity, and a sincere attachment for Mademoiselle de la Fayette ; but almost all young people, and even the most honourable, are dangerous confidants in affairs of this nature.

Women in such a case always naturally take the part of love. They defend romances which appear to them interesting. Besides, Madame de Beaumont enjoyed by anticipations the glory which she pictured in future as her friend's and

perhaps also a little from the idea of the influence and the favour she should herself one day derive from it. We often conceal from ourselves our own ambition ; it is easy to attribute the secret movements of it to the zeal of friendship.

For eight days nothing was spoken of Saint Germain, but the favour enjoyed by Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and the extraordinary ascendancy she had acquired over the king, who constantly abided by her counsels, and who had been brought to declare he would himself distribute his own benefactions !

The cardinal knew, through Boisenvall, that the king wrote every day to Mademoiselle de la Fayette ; and as soon as he had these letters secretly carried to him, he read them quite through ; they were then neatly re-sealed, and received without any suspicion of this audacious breach of honour. (6.)

The cardinal could not refrain from admiring the purity of this correspondence, the angelic character, and the lofty sentiments of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. He saw the king was passionately in love. At last he said to Chevigny,

"The king is in love, and for the first time. This is a serious passion ; who knows to what lengths it may extend ! It is necessary to speak to Father Caussin." Father Caussin was the confessor of the king and of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. The cardinal evinced the liveliest inquietude for *the conscience* of the king ; that is to say, for his attachment to Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

Father Caussin replied with good-nature, that this friendship was very useful to the salvation of the king and the welfare of France. He detailed reasons to this effect ; and he added, that

he was certain this connexion was perfectly innocent, and that it had already been the means of re-uniting the king and the queen.

Notwithstanding these assurances, the cardinal maintained all his *scruples*; and as the good father replied to him always with the same simplicity, he changed the subject, spoke to him of his promotion, offered his protection, and proposed to him a bishopric. Father Caussin replied with modesty and innocence, that he had no ambition, and that he was satisfied with his situation. (7.)

He left the cardinal very discontented and very disturbed.

"The king is subjugated, and at the same time exalted," said the cardinal to Chavigny. "Mademoiselle de la Fayette is a romantic being, replete with spirit, energy, and courage. Father Caussin is an imbecile character, who comprehends nothing, and who aspires to nothing! Ah, this becomes embarrassing, I must reflect upon it maturely."

Father Caussin, in effect, very ignorant of the subtlety of love, traced only virtuous friendship in this chaste attachment, and doubted not that Mademoiselle de la Fayette was solely occupied at this moment in reconciling the king and queen; his mind had engendered neither the scruples nor the apprehensions of the cardinal. He exhorted Mademoiselle de la Fayette to remain at court, and re-assured her with sincerity on those sources of disquietude that had not entered into his own imagination.*

Mademoiselle de Hautefort was expected at the court with extreme impatience; some desired her return, from mere curiosity; others

*Historical.

in the hope that she would resume her former influence over the heart of Louis, and that she would cause her to be banished by whom she had been supplanted. Among this number many were to be found, who were neither the enemies of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, nor the friends of Mademoiselle de Hautefort; and who only wished the change, from flattering themselves they might possibly benefit by it in some shape or other.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort at last arrived. Previous to making her re-appearance at Saint Germain, she had gathered on her journey all the news of Paris.

She was told, that the cardinal, to ruin Mademoiselle de la Fayette, had brought about the reunion of the king and queen; that the latter had obtained from the king the recall of Mademoiselle de Hautefort, and the sacrifice of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. They predicted to Mademoiselle de Hautefort, that she would regain all her influence over the king; and that, being the favourite of the queen also, she would consequently govern the court completely.

In the midst of all these conjectures, which had little resemblance to truth, it is remarkable that no voice, no suspicion was excited against the prudence of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; they accused her of ambition, but they universally did justice to the purity of her conduct and her virtue*.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort, full of the most brilliant hopes, arrived at Saint Germain two hours before that appointed for the queen's circle: this princess received her with great effusion of sensibility, however she expected it, and it was not from her alone that she looked for it.

* Historical.

A large concourse on this evening assembled in the circle of the queen, desirous of seeing the two rivals meet ; and, above all, anxious to observe what impression the first appearance of Mademoiselle de Hautefort would produce upon the king. At length Mademoiselle de Hautefort was seen very much dressed, with a countenance full of confidence, and a triumphant air, placed behind the queen, often whispering her, smiling as with secret meaning, and seeking to draw and rally round her all her old partisans.

At the same time Mademoiselle de la Fayette, always clothed in black, and conspicuous only from her dazzling beauty, was directed to her seat by chance ; simple, natural, without desiring it, she attracted and fixed upon herself every eye.

At last the king appeared ; he again saw Mademoiselle de Hautefort without evincing the slightest emotion ; he spoke to her with sweetness and affability : this was worse than a coldness which might have been attributed to the remains of resentment ; it spoke perfect indifference, a complete oblivion of the past ! Louis after having taken some turns in the apartment, stationed himself near Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and remained at her side for nearly three quarters of an hour.

This evening cleared up every doubt, and annihilated every false conjecture. Every one remained convinced that Mademoiselle de Hautefort would no longer play a part ; that Mademoiselle de la Fayette was permanently established. From this moment she became the universal object, and flattery put her most ingenious and subtle engines in play to please and attract

her. But in the society of the queen, Mademoiselle de la Fayette was treated with open malevolence ; and, above all, Mademoiselle de Hautefort could not dissemble her jealousy and her indignation. When Mademoiselle de la Fayette appeared, they had the air of mistrusting her ; if they were engaged in conversation it abruptly ceased ; they spoke in a lowered tone, or made significant signs ; and some even went so far, they did not affect an equivocal conduct towards her, but openly evinced a desire to displease and offend her.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort had drawn into this little conspiracy only the dutchess of Chevreuse, the marchioness of Senecé and Chavigny ; all the rest regarded Mademoiselle de la Fayette with deference, who, always calm, noble, and consistent, showed neither disdain nor astonishment, and did not even appear to remark this unpleasant and affected manner of seeking to hurt and offend her. The queen had become cold and frigid in her manner towards Mademoiselle de la Fayette ; but with negative kindness, neither authorized nor reprimanded the conduct of her favourites.

For some time, though the king was infinitely improved in his conduct towards her, yet the princess appeared absorbed in a profound melancholy ; she complained of health ; and as there was not thought to be any source of chagrin, particularly at that time, the visible alteration in her character and disposition was attributed entirely to physical causes.

One morning when the marchioness de Beaumont was in the apartment of the queen with that princess, the dutchess de Chevreuse, and Mademoiselle de Hautefort, the latter amused

herself with ridiculing the prolonged mourning worn by Mademoiselle de la Fayette. The queen took up the subject.

"Why," said she, "should you see merely ridiculous affectation, where only a touching and respectful sentiment may be traced?"

"Madame," replied the marchioness, "pray let your kindness dispense with a reply to this question from Mademoiselle de Hautefort."

These few words engaged them in a dialogue, animated and piquant; in which Madame de Beaumont had the advantage, and defended Mademoiselle de la Fayette with much vivacity and warmth.

Indignant at not being supported by the queen, who preserved a profound silence, Mademoiselle de Hautefort lost sight of prudence: and even gave her to understand, that she hated Mademoiselle de la Fayette because she had not revealed to the queen all that the king had communicated to her; and that this mysterious conduct proved that a culpable intrigue had existed!

At these words the queen surveyed her with an expression of indignation. "I know from the king," she interrupted her by saying, "all that has passed from the lips of Mademoiselle de la Fayette to him; and she it was who of her own accord requested your recal, and who is only occupied in re-uniting him to me."

This speech was as a clap of thunder to Mademoiselle de Hautefort, and struck Madame de Beaumont with strong admiration. In fact, there was much greatness of soul in sacrificing self-love to justify a rival! But the queen could not pardon Mademoiselle de Hautefort for having uttered that which extorted this act of justice.

The queen till then had concealed it in profound secrecy, even from her most confidential

associates (they perhaps always taking the part of Mademoiselle de la Fayette,) and now she had revealed it with little reflection, for the first involuntary movements of fine minds are always sublime! reflection, far from improving them in general, only represses or chills; for that too often presents egotism and vanity under the semblance of prudence and reason.

The Marchioness de Beaumont, in admiring the noble equity of the queen, knew not however all the merit of this action: she fancied in the queen an apathy that was no longer hers; and it was upon the same idea that she rested in security the repose of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

The king, however, was now solely engrossed with the assiduous care of pleasing Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and more particularly when she did not require him to deliver himself up to laborious devotion to public affairs.

He wished to give a *fete* in the forest of Saint Germain: it was in the month of July; and Mademoiselle de la Fayette, informed of this intention, begged him to select Saint Anne's day, she being the patroness of the queen.

It was at the court, indeed, a strange and novel event, to see the king occupied with a *fete*, and to see him give it to the queen!

Each novelty at court puts every mind in motion: some are astonished, others unquiet: but of all personages, the most discontented at that period, was Mademoiselle de Hautefort; cruelly humiliated by the calm indifference of the king, expecting nothing further from the sentiments of the queen, incensed at the triumphs of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, she could not dissemble her inquietude, her anger, and ill-humour. What also quite contributed to overwhelm her, was the kind

and gracious manner with which the queen always treated the Marchioness de Beaumont, the intimate friend of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; and she testified the surprise it occasioned her, to the dutchess of Chevreuse.

"It is not astonishing," replied the latter, "that, after a long absence, the court should have become to you an inexplicable scene. People in this place appear more changeable than elsewhere, because, in a court, they never act with consistency of character, but only from the influence of their passions, and the impulse of self-interest. Thus the brilliant and gay count de Soissons, having imbibed a passionate attachment for Mademoiselle de la Fayette, is become melancholy and romantic. The king gives *fetes*; the prudent and haughty La Fayette does not dissemble her partiality for the king, and she endures the coldness of the queen, and our epigrams, without appearing wounded by them; and, lastly, the queen is become sorrowful and abstracted."

"Some deep distress appears to consume her heart; it admits no confidence; what secret can it be that she conceals from us?"

"I cannot surmise. She finds a husband in the king."

"Do you believe it?"

"I am very certain of it—This miracle has been wrought by Mademoiselle de la Fayette; the queen in my presence has confessed it."

"Mademoiselle de la Fayette acts from the deepest policy. The queen is sensible of it; and it is terrible for her to owe the restoration of her husband only to the ambition of her rival!"

"Yes, without doubt, the pride of the queen revolts—"

"To have *fetes* nominally given to her, while in cination would bestow them upon another!"

"Such, in fact, is the *fete* of St. Anne, which is to take place in a few days."

"The king, who has never thought of such a thing in the finest days of their youth, suddenly embraces the idea of celebrating it when the queen is five-and-thirty—and with the taste the king has for *fetes* !"

"But he says it is for her, and the queen appears to believe it."

"It is better she should ; but what a humiliation, when every one is sensible that her rival is the object of the *fete*."

"Her *rival* ! this word appears so extraordinary to me ! When the king was in love with you, we never gave you that appellation."

"Because I never returned his love ; I treated it with raillery ; I told every thing to the queen ; you know I did."

"It must then be acknowledged that the *rivalship* of Mademoiselle de la Fayette has been more serviceable than your fidelity, which only produced quarrels and animosity—This girl does not please me ; she is not amusing herself, for she actually loves the king."

"And it is this which must offend the queen."

"She is more than offended ; her heart suffers—and this is her secret."

"Her heart ! No, we all very well know she has never loved the king."

"But the human heart has so many caprices ! The king, in the estimation of the queen, and that of all her circle, has become attractive and interesting ; he is not what he was with them. He loves, and is beloved. The throne, imposing as are its prerogatives, cannot always prove a preservative from ridicule ; we have seen that it cannot. But to please, to inspire a violent passion,

and to partake it gives apparently a person a consideration, a kind of consequence and weight above that even of the most elevated rank :— the king is no longer laughed at.”

“How! can you believe that the queen.—”

“Yes, she sees that a lovely vivacious woman, of much taste, can love the king exclusively; it is a discovery which has been made rather late, and even that renders it the more painful.”

“How will all this end?”

“Notwithstanding her jealousy, the queen, bound by gratitude, will never dare to complain. The king will remain under the yoke, and his most courageous actions will spring from his own weakness. The cardinal will be overthrown; and Mademoiselle de la Fayette will reign with less talent than the prime minister, but with quite as much arrogance and despotism.”

“All France will most likely revolt,” said the dutchess, laughing; and we shall only have one chance left us, that then we may play some active part; but now, we are condemned to be complete nonentities.”

Such gloomy predictions caused much anxiety in the little circle of the queen; for many other members of it had the same opinion of the ambition and the power of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

Presages which announced the fall of Richelieu, became matter of rejoicing; but at the same time there was much apprehension entertained from the sovereign empire of a person endowed with rectitude, elevation of soul, insensible to flattery, and loving the king for himself; in fact, at court a favourite of his disposition always appears a very alarming phenomenon.

The day before the eve of Saint Anne, the king and queen, followed by many persons of the court,

among whom was Mademoiselle de la Fayette, visited at Longchamps a charitable institution erected by Saint Vincent. (8.)

Upon quitting this little hospital for monks, the king wished to proceed on foot to the wood of Boulogne, whither all the carriages had been sent.

About twenty feet from the edifice, the queen and all her suite saw from a distance a troop of young girls advancing, who came with an offering of flowers, and an address to the queen.

The king, who was at the side of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, said aloud to the queen, in a laughing manner, that he wished to avoid the harangue, and that he would therefore precede her majesty, and wait for her at some little distance ; and in the same low tone he proposed to Mademoiselle de la Fayette to be the companion of his flight, offering her his arm ; and immediately led her forward, leaving every one astonished at this gay and vivacious manner.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette could not possibly refuse to accompany the king, but she feared the effect which this kind of scene would produce upon so many witnesses.

The king kept her arm under his, closely pressing it, as if he were apprehensive she would escape, and at the same time he walked on with extreme quickness.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette followed him with those unequal steps which are always obvious in a constrained movement. Distress and anxiety were painted upon her countenance ; the king did not guide, he drew her on ; it was not a walk, it seemed much more as though she was carried off.

Their strong emotion and the rapidity of their steps caused a palpitation in the hearts of both.

Far from having that gaiety, that confidence he had just exhibited, Louis now turned pale and trembled; a deep and melancholy sentiment, mingled with his agitation; he found an inexpressible charm in this imprudent flight, and even in the idea that he drew away Mademoiselle against her own will. He had subjugated her, but he thought also, even in the moment of triumph and happiness, that it was but an illusion.

They were soon at six hundred paces distance from the group, among whom the queen had stopped with as much impatience as chagrin. All at once the heavens seemed inclosed; dark black clouds rapidly spread over the sky, and day appeared almost entirely to vanish.

"Ah, sire!" cried Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "whither would you conduct me?"

As she said these words, a flash of lightning darted from a cloud, and at the same instant a clap of thunder resounded so violently, that Mademoiselle de la Fayette thought the bolt had fallen! She uttered a piercing scream which penetrated the soul of Louis. He took her in his arms, blessing the storm, and redoubling the quickness of his steps. He carried her in this manner more than a hundred paces; at last he gently disengaged her from his arms, but in doing so she could scarcely support herself.

Flashes of lightning and tremendous thunder succeeded in an alarming manner; a heavy rain mingled with hail-stones, accompanied it. Louis opened his coat, and spread one side of it over the shoulders of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, whom he kept pressed against his breast: he took off his hat, and turning down the brim of it, held it over her head, notwithstanding her entreaties that he would take care of himself.

It was at a little distance from Longchamps, an ancient convent of *religieuses*, founded by Isabella, daughter of Saint Louis, who had there consecrated herself to God! The king perceiving a peasant coming out of the church, called to him, made himself known, and asked him to go to the hospital of monks, and tell the queen that he had gained shelter; that she must remain at the hospital, not only till the carriages came which had been sent to the wood of Boulogne, but until the rain had ceased, as their carriages were open ones; and that there he would himself seek her; and while giving this order, he offered up fervent prayers for the continuance of the storm!

The doors of the exterior church of the *religieuses* were open; it only contained some priests, for the villages had been prevented coming. They were just concluding the solemn consecration of a young noviciate, who was about to pronounce her vows.

The appearance of the king was a great event at this awful moment. The priest of Longchamps, with the attendant clergy, came to receive and conduct him to the grate which separated this small church from that of the nuns. The black curtain of the grate was thrown open, and through the grate was seen the pall, extended over the prostrate *religieuse*, who was about to renounce the world and all its illusions! Some funeral hymns were chaunted.

The holy spectacle struck Mademoiselle de la Fayette; the disorder of her imagination and the troubled state of her heart, rendered her the more susceptible of receiving lively and profound impressions: she fell on her knees on the stone at some distance from the king, and behind him. At the moment in which the pall was raised, the

priest advanced to present to the king the long black veil which was destined for ever to cover the young nun, that the prioress might then receive it from the hand of the king, and give it to him.

Louis turned; he advanced some steps to take the veil, and found himself at the side of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, still upon her knees, praying with fervour, and reverentially bent!

Louis surveyed her with the tenderest emotion. In this moment of abstraction of thought, the veil accidentally dropped from his hands; it fell upon the head of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and completely covered her face! She remained motionless.

Louis started; he hastily seized the veil, raised it, uncovered, and again gazed on that cherished face still bent downwards with humid eyes, and cheeks pale and bathed with tears!

Louis contemplated it with strong emotion. He thought he saw in her the victim of the sacrifice about to be consummated; he took her hand, saying with wildness, and a broken voice—
“ Rise, where are you ? ”

“ On a tomb ! ” she replied, gazing around her.

In fact, she was on her knees on a sepulchral stone.

The words, “ on a tomb,” completed the chilling emotion of the king.—

It was, however, necessary the ceremony should be finished. The king advanced with unsteady step towards the grate; he gave the fatal veil with a trembling hand; the next moment the curtain was drawn over the grate, and a profound silence followed the funeral chaunt.

The storm had continued without any cessation

of its violence : the priest came to receive the orders of the king, who wished to wait the close of the tempest in the vestry, where he remained with Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

There resting on two seats of straw, and left alone, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, surveying the king, whose hair and garments were still wet, said,

“Great God ! what a terrific storm, and how your majesty has suffered from it !”

“Suffered !” repeated Louis, “Ah ! do not believe it : this day has been the most precious of my life :—I have been so happy during all the time of our walk. I fled the malignant and curious court, who observe us, and who separated us ! Alone with you, the world was all centered in that road which we traversed together ! Freed from a troublesome suite and all the shackles of grandeur, restored to nature, with what delight I breathed the pure air of the fields and of liberty ! How enchanting did that scenery appear to me which we passed together : but I saw with pain, even then, the beaten tract of a road I wished to efface, and never again behold !—Happier, a thousand times happier, if with you I could have wandered into inaccessible solitude, never more to return therefrom !”

Here the voice of Louis failed ; he paused.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette held down her eyes ; a vivid colour flushed her cheeks.

“And you,” replied the king, “you who are the object of so tender a sentiment ; are you then unmoved ?”

“Ah ! sire,” she replied, “my heart is always the same. But this morning nothing has so deeply affected my mind as the holy spectacle which awaited us in this religious sanctuary ! I shall of-

ten recal this unexpected, awful sight, and always with emotion ! I shall retrace it in that moment when the most tremendous peals of thunder made these vaults resound : I felt the religious veil fall as an immense weight upon my head ; that heavy and chilling veil fell from your hands !—A deathlike coldness ran through my veins—I remained motionless, annihilated ! It seemed to me that a Supreme Power riveted me there for ever, plunged in the eternal sleep of death !—Ah ! if this should be a presentiment ; if Heaven, who knows far better than ourselves the inmost recesses of our hearts, should condemn the sentiment which unites us, if it ordains our separation—

“ Ah, sire ! ”—A gust of tears interrupted her voice, she covered her face with her handkerchief.

“ No, no ! ” exclaimed the king, “ Heaven protects this holy friendship formed for my glory, and for the happiness of France ! Are you not the titular saint of this empire ? Without you, truth would be harsh and severe to me ; without you, how should I know all my duties ; and without you, even knowing them, should I have resolution to fulfil them ? Ah far from alarming yourself with the sentiments that you inspire, they should be to you a pledge the most certain of the divine protection ; they have elevated my mind and fortified my character. It is a celestial fire which has purified my heart !—Prescribe, order, I can no longer make sacrifices ; it is from inclination, it is with enthusiasm that I now obey the sacred laws of duty and of virtue ; it is only obeying you and drawing myself still closer towards you ! ”

This seducing and dangerous language took

too much effect on the heart of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; her fears and her scruples vanished; admiration, joy, and the purest, most tender love effaced even their remembrance. She resigned herself entirely to a fancied security of innocence, and to a blind and devoted confidence.

This conversation lasted nearly an hour. The king apologized for his recent conduct; he painted the ambition of his mother, but he shed some tears in speaking of her exile; he promised to recal her, and he was justified on this ground in the eyes of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. He altogether evinced so much penetration and discernment in drawing the portrait of Richelieu, that Mademoiselle de la Fayette was persuaded that he who could so well observe and discriminate, could neither possess a weak mind, nor fail in decision of character himself; and it is an error into which those people often fall who have strong minds. they think it is quite sufficient, and that nothing more is wanting than to discern clearly. And doubtless the first of human beings may sometimes wander and go astray in darkness. It requires the light of day to take with security a difficult journey; but what would be the light to him, who, by irrepressible sloth and indolence, will not follow the guide! The extreme and most complete proof of weakness is not to be blinded by circumstance; it is, on the contrary, that which is evinced when a man is fully sensible of the path he ought to pursue, and yet has not resolution to enter it.

The king, while detailing the faults and errors of Richelieu, much exalted his talents, and the service which he rendered to France; but he pledged his word to be indefatigable in obtaining proper instruction, and learning all that was advisable to render him capable of reigning alone,

and to dismiss Richelieu as soon as peace should be proclaimed.

This promise once pronounced, Mademoiselle de la Fayette was fully satisfied ; and Louis, to whom time was granted, gave his word to this effect, not only with honour and sincerity, but with genuine gratification ; it satisfied his hatred against the minister : it was a secret impulse of revenge, and which required no vigorous decisive act at the moment. Weak people readily make engagements for the future : distant projects do not alarm them, because they can more easily and with more promptitude, presume upon their own strength than calculate it.

At last, the noise of approaching carriages was heard, and the conversation was from necessity concluded—a conversation which completely displayed the sentiments of Mademoiselle de la Fayette for the king, as well as the impassioned attachment of this prince to her.

They ascended their carriages, and found the queen melancholy and abstracted ; she complained of a violent head ache : the king was affable and obliging, he recounted with much ease, all that he could repeat about the storm, and the profession of the young nun.

Happiness and much abstraction of mind preserved Mademoiselle de la Fayette from that embarrassment which she might otherwise have betrayed : her thoughts entirely dwelt on the recent conversation, and on the promises of the king.

She passed the whole of the evening *tete-a-tete* with Madame de Beaumont, to talk of the king, to praise him, to dwell on his remembrance, and to indulge those seducing hopes which he had excited !

The day after the morrow was that of Saint

Anne, and of the queen's *fête*. Louis, who had himself had the ordering of the whole, and invented all the amusements, announced that it would be celebrated in a part of the forest of Saint Germain, and that it would take place when the night was fully set in.

At the appointed hour, the queen, Mademoiselle de Guise, and Mademoiselle de Vendôme, the dutchess of Chevreuse, Mademoiselle de Hautefort, the marchioness de Beaumont, and Mademoiselle de la Fayette, at the desire of the king, all entered one carriage, and he undertook to drive this open vehicle himself, saying that almost all the *fête* would consist in a promenade.

An infinite number of other carriages followed that of the queen.

They entered a long walk, to which the lamps concealed beneath the foliage, gave only the softened light of a beautiful resplendent moon : they heard at a distance some charming music in concert, which seemed to issue from the recesses of the forest.—Mystery, prudence, and timidity seemed couched under the whole : this was the ruling feature of the *fête*. In the midst of this walk, they stopped before a large arch, formed with festoons of roses ; there was seen in perspective across some transparencies, an allegorical group, representing, Truth, surrounded by rural divinities, who extended some little veils of gauze over the trees covered with cyphers, formed of flowers, of which the eye could only distinguish some letters, when a chorus chaunted, in lowered tones, these words :

Pour oser offrir nos hommages
 A la déité de ces bois,
 Voilons ces chiffres, ces ombrages,
 Point d'éclat, point de bruit, adoucissons nos voix !
 Elle est modeste autant que belle,
 L'éloge ne peut la flatter,
 Et ce n'est jamais que loin d'elle
 Qu'il est permis de la chanter.

Dans l'ombre épaisse du mystère
 Elle dérobe à tous les yeux
 Le bien caché qu'elle a su faire ;
 Taisons-nous, respectons ses secrets généreux.
 Elle est modeste autant que belle,
 L'éloge ne peut la flatter,
 Et ce n'est jamais que loin d'elle
 Qu'il est permis de la chanter.

Lorsque sa bonté nous attire,
 Ah ! du moins, disons-lui si bas
 Ce que sans dessein elle inspire,
 Que même en écoutant elle n'entende pas...
 Elle est modeste autant que belle,
 L'éloge ne peut la flatter,
 Et ce n'est jamais que loin d'elle
 Qu'il est permis de la chanter.

After having heard these verses, they passed through the remainder of the inclosure, passing occasionally to contemplate the scenery ; but all around a kind of twilight reigned, objects partially veiled, sweet singing pictures in distance, and mysterious, or warm and tender scenes. At last they descended from the carriage to enter a magnificently decorated ball-room, where they danced till daylight.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette, during the whole procession, had successively experienced every degree of emotion. She could not mistake the intention of the king ; she knew but too well

what was the real object of the *fête* and of these verses.

She found much of the ingenious and the touching in this novel *fête*. Great was the sensibility with which her heart appreciated the delicacy of the whole arrangement: but the confusion and tender embarrassment they inspired, was among too many curious and envious observers not to alter the charm and sweetness of her gratitude.

The queen during the *fête*, preserved a carriage at once the most simple and the most noble; she praised every scene without affectation, as teeming with new and pleasing inventions; she received with thanks the bouquet which Flora and the Hamadryades presented to her, when they performed a ballet in the ball-room.

Louis, who had not been without anxiety for the light in which this *fête* might have been regarded, was quite satisfied with her, and during the whole of the ballet, which lasted more than half an hour, he continued seated next her, conversing with an air of good humour and familiarity which no one had ever before witnessed in his manner towards her.

The queen, affected by it, said little, but her eyes and the general expression of her countenance spoke her gratitude. She had placed on a raised cushion, at her side, the bouquet she had received from the divinities of the wood. The king, rising, went to walk in the saloon; but first took a flower from the bouquet, which he gave to the queen, begging her to keep it.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette had retired to a little distance, but was seated in such a manner that she could perfectly well observe the king; her gaze was fixed upon him, and in the enjoy-

ment of contemplating the effects of her own influence, she lost her own embarrassment.

Louis, after having taken some turns in the apartment, involuntarily approached Mademoiselle de la Fayette and seating himself near her, said smiling—

“Are you satisfied with me?”

These words were overheard; they were whispered in repetition throughout the room, but not without alteration. It was pretended that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had been heard to say very loud to the king, “I am satisfied with you.”

This phrase was thus repeated to Mademoiselle de Hautefort and the dutchess de Chevreuse, who were seated immediately behind the queen. It could not be imagined that Mademoiselle de la Fayette, with so noble a carriage, and a character so perfectly delicate and reserved, was really capable of such an impropriety.

But Mademoiselle de Hautefort had credulity and hatred to support her belief of it; she repeated many times over, that it was strange, inconceivable!

The queen at last questioned her on the subject of her astonishment; she inclined her lips to her ear, and related what had just been said.

The queen blushed, and replied coldly, “I do not believe a word of it;” and soon afterwards, rising from her chair, she called the marchioness de Beaumont and took her arm, saying she would promenade in the illuminated inclosure.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort and her other ladies prepared to follow her; she prevented them and went out, attended only by the marchioness of Beaumont, leaving the favourites, and, above all, Mademoiselle de Hautefort, in the greatest consternation.

When the queen was alone with the marchioness, she said to her, "Well, Madame de Beaumont, what do you think of this *fete*?"

"Madame," replied the marchioness, a little embarrassed, "I have found it delightful, worthy of him who gives it, and her who is the object of it."

"And *she* who is not the *object*; what, what ought *she* to feel?"

"How, Madame?"

"You perfectly comprehend me; in very truth, do you imagine it possible I can take to myself the verses sung?"

"And yet, Madame, all the eulogiums that they contain are quite appropriate to your majesty. Do you not know that you do good in secret always, that you hate flattery?"

"Ah! love has dictated these verses; they are not meant for me! I require to open my heart—let us speak without disguise, I am resolved, whatever may be my private sentiments, never to fail in that respect which is due to the virtues of Mademoiselle de la Fayette and to appear to remark in the conduct of the king only that which does not hurt and offend me."

"Ah! Madame, how much of real greatness of mind there is in these wise resolutions, for it appertains only to the indulgent and merciful to dissemble without being debased by it, and superior goodness can alone forgive with proper dignity!"

"Yes, I can render justice to Mademoiselle de la Fayette; you are not ignorant of it. Hatred itself cannot dare impeach her honour; she makes a truly meritorious use of the king's attachment; the king has performed many acts of justice and of clemency, and in defiance of the cardinal, he is become to me what France is de-

sirous he should be. Every species of gratitude is due to Mademoiselle de la Fayette ; but still, can I be happy, and can she be without remorse, when the king has declared for her such sentiments ?” And can she mistake such testimonies of passion for simple friendship ?”

“Yet it is most true, Madame, that the king has only spoken to her in the language of a friend.”

“His are neither the tone, nor the expression, nor the look of simple friendship !”

“His conduct has been such. He has required nothing, not even those private interviews that the confidence of intimate friendship might ask ! Their conversations have passed in the presence of witnesses, and beneath the observation of the most malevolent.—The king asks no more under what pretence, therefore, can Mademoiselle de la Fayette break a bond so pure, and that with her sovereign, and where besides she sees the utility of the counsels that she gives him ?”

“However, if she find herself in danger, would not even religion sanction the triumph of such a preference ?”

“She entertains for the king only a respectful attachment, which has nothing in common with love.”

“You think this ; *she* perhaps believes it ; but she deceives herself ; she passionately loves the king !”

“I can venture to assure your majesty, that she has only an attachment for virtue. If she knew the opinion of your majesty, I am convinced she would not hesitate to quit the court ; but it will never be through me that she will learn it ; for I am persuaded that her retreat

at such a moment would be a serious misfortune. It would plunge the king into the deepest dejection ; he would see in this rupture only levity, injustice, and ingratitude : this chagrin would weaken his good resolutions and re-establish the tottering power of the cardinal ; and lastly, it would have a fatal influence over all his sentiments. Your majesty will, I trust, condescend to excuse the sincerity of this declaration, reflecting only on the confidence with which I have at this moment been honoured, that consideration imposes on me the necessity of dissembling nothing."

At these words, the queen, as if displeased, replied with coldness and brevity, and pursuing the way to the ball-room, immediately entered it.

Madame de Beaumont, in making so candid an avowal, had wished to deprive the queen of the hope that this confidential dialogue would be repeated to Mademoiselle de la Fayette ; for she had perfectly comprehended the secret intention of the queen, and that she was desirous of alarming the conscience of her friend.

Princes are so accustomed not only to be obeyed, but to have their wishes divined and anticipated, that they instantly take offence at the slightest resistance, regarding it as a kind of rebellion.

The queen, for some days, treated Madame de Beaumont coldly, but at length her natural sweetness of disposition overcame this slight impulse of resentment, and the more readily, as, upon reflection she found much solidity of judgment in the reasons which influenced the marchioness to desire that Mademoiselle de la Fayette should remain at court.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort, really wishing to

regain all her rights over the heart of the queen, resolved to have an explanation with this princess ; and she confided her intention to her friend the dutchess of Chevreuse.

"I do not advise it," said the dutchess.

"Wherefore not ? I have nothing to reproach myself with in my conduct to the queen, and my attachment to her has been most constant and unshaken."

"Well, what do you wish to discover ?—Are you certain you have done nothing wrong ?"

"Indeed I can defy her to cite a single blameable action !"

"So much the worse."

"Why ?"

"Because you will then show her she has, in your estimation, been capricious, ungrateful, unjust : you will wound her, you will confuse her ; she will have nothing to say in her defence, she will at once marshal between herself and you all the barriers of superior rank : thrown in an instant to an enormous distance from her, sunk by a single look from the fragile elevation of the favourite, you will be compelled to assume another language ; you will humbly resign instead of justifying yourself ; and she who not long since in confidential intimacy treated you as an equal, and called you her friend, will coldly pronounce upon you an irrevocable sentence !"

Notwithstanding these prudent suggestions, Mademoiselle de Hautefort, naturally haughty and opinionated, persisted ; and one evening, when she was alone with the queen, as she was just retiring to bed, she entered upon this dangerous explanation in very cautious terms ; but the queen, fatigued and disgusted by her malig-

nity, and who waited only for a favourable opportunity to be rid of her, hastily closed the curtains, saying, "that she was weary of her arrogance, her reproaches, and her importunity; and that she wished to hear nothing more."

Mademoiselle de Hautefort was confounded, annihilated! All her pride forsook her; she threw herself on her knees beside the bed of the queen, calling Heaven to witness her innocence! She wept, sobbed, and groaned; but in vain: the queen was inflexible.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort in despair quitted the chamber, thinking herself cured of ambition and arrogance, because she bore the most violent resentment against the queen. And it was not the first time that a disgraced or superseded courtier had taken resentment, rage, and ill-humour for a happy inclination towards philosophy!

The next day Mademoiselle de Hautefort received an order to quit the court. (9.)

She was neither regretted nor worthy of being so. Her hatred of Mademoiselle de la Fayette had rendered her ridiculous and absurd in the general opinion, and she had, by its indulgence, become odious to the king: the queen had perceived this, and it was one of the causes of her disgrace.

A few months after, an important event made a great noise throughout Europe. The queen declared herself pregnant! The consternation of the cardinal was equal to the surprise of the court, and the joy of all France. He had for some time observed the change which had been effected in the king. Louis himself distributed favours and rewards: he was shut up every day for three hours in his cabinet, and he devoted him-

self to business of the state. Those letters of his to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, which the cardinal had read, had acquainted him that the counsels of Mademoiselle de la Fayette were as oracles with Louis ; that she, with sovereign sway, disposed of his every action, even had led his inclinations, and that it was her desire to see him independently reign with glory ; and to produce this effect, she laboured with energy and perseverance.

The re-union of the king and queen had been effected by her, it might be said, to sanctify this singular connexion ; and if the queen gave to France an heir to its throne, this event would establish for ever the consideration and influence of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

Struck with all these reflections, and trembling for his own authority, the cardinal at length saw, that to prevail against Mademoiselle de la Fayette, he must have recourse to all the inexhaustible resources of his fertile imagination ; and that neither known arts, nor common means, could be employed against her with a chance of success.

One morning, being shut up with Boisensval, the latter told him that the attachment of the king seemed every day to heighten.

"But," asked the cardinal, "do you not confound love with admiration and gratitude ? Are you very certain that a sentiment so pure and tranquil at its commencement has actually become a violent passion ?"

"Yes, my lord, it is now love itself ; a passion which, like all other passions, agitates, tortures, and renders him unhappy. He esteems and admires Mademoiselle de la Fayette so warmly, that he endeavours to conceal it from her : but

I do not think he is himself any longer deceived in his own sentiments, though he has not quite dismissed me. I have exerted every nerve to lower her in the estimation of both his reason and imagination ; and I have with address tried to lessen the merits of the object whom he idolizes ! But all this is vain and futile ; if she be not spoken of with enthusiasm, he will not listen ; it really might be thought he did not even understand, but that he was spoken to in a foreign unknown tongue ! Do not be deceived then, my lord ; notwithstanding his weakness, his prudence, and his devotion, he loves with a *profane*——”

The cardinal smiled as he said, “Yes that may be true : friendship, heroic friendship, requires great strength of mind ; but love needs not that. It is highly probable the king is very amorous.”

“He is quite lost in love”

“And his conscientious scruples, what are become of them ?”

“Father Caussin is so good a man ! He is convinced, that if the king were conscious of this passion, he would reveal it to his confessor ; but he is assured he will triumph over it : he asserts that he never has any conversation with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, but in the presence of witnesses ; that she directs him only to good actions ; that he would be nothing without her ; that she has reconciled him to the queen ; that she has bestowed great benefactions upon charitable institutions.”

“*Upon convents* also ; and that she urges him to dismiss me ; but Father Caussin must learn and be convinced, that no circumstance or event can ever tolerate an adulterous passion.”

“The king, from habit perhaps, still denominates his love as a simple friendship. In truth

whatever may happen, I do not think he will have resolution to pronounce the word *love*."

"Do not heed that; we shall convince Father Caussin, that an intimate friendship between a married man of thirty-five years, and a young and beautiful girl, has some danger: I wish at once to give him a short lesson."

"It is very right, my lord, that a head of the church should teach his duty to a simple monk. Besides, it is universally known that your eminence is as profound a divine, as you are a great politician."

"Attend, Boisenvall; nothing that can be done, will have the effect of lessening the warmth of the king's attachment, or will now prejudice his mind against a female who has a perfect contempt of riches, and is destitute of ambition; who asks nothing for herself, nor even for her friends; who is free from coquetry, and whose conduct defies suspicion. It is necessary to change our measures. You must now devote yourself, on the contrary, to exalt her, to inflame the imagination of the king for her."

"For whom, my lord?"

"For Mademoiselle de la Fayette."

"Can your eminence thus resolve? Can you seek to serve her who has sworn your ruin?"

It is hers that I meditate; if you will second me, it is secured, and your fortune made; and such a fortune as you can form no idea of even from all I have already done for you."

"My attachment, my devotion, are yours to command!"

"I know it, Boisenvall; and I speak to you this, not to encourage you, for you do not need it, but simply to acquaint you of the infinite value I attach to this service?"

"Speak, my lord ; what am I to undertake ?"

"What I have already told you, to influence and embolden the king—but with great address, gradually, and insensibly to efface the ill you have already said of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, by declaring that you have conquered your prejudices against her, that she has gained your admiration, and then you will praise her to the greatest excess. To complete all, evince the most perfect confidence in her virtue, and in the integrity of the king, and by these means augment the self-presumption of the king."

"This will not be very difficult; the king believes he has had his honour put to the test."

"Has he shown you the letters of Mademoiselle de la Fayette?"

"No, my lord ; but when he is led to believe I am her admirer, I shall obtain every confidence ; I am convinced of this."

"Then be assiduous in persuading him he is beloved as warmly as he himself loves"

"I shall not in that deceive him, for I do believe it."

"And I also ; but she has great firmness of mind ; she loves without weakness. Induce the king to ask private interviews, secret meetings, under the promise of inviolable respect, that all he requires of her is confidence in his honour and her own virtue. He will never induce her to take an improper step ; she will refuse him, and they will consequently quarrel."

"I at once comprehend you : the idea is excellent ! However Mademoiselle loves, she is without experience in matters of this nature : she is a woman—and suppose she was to suffer herself to be drawn on ? If she should yield—"

"She will never pardon him ; she will distance herself from the court to conceal her shame."

"It is necessary to provide against the possible; and if in this case love should at once lead her astray and retain her?"—

"The king, naturally chaste and religious, would imbibe honour from this frailty; he would no longer esteem her, he would even cease to love her: enthusiasm intoxicates him; if he should gain her, only disgust and remorse would be the result of the connexion: but I again repeat, Mademoiselle de la Fayette will make the sacrifice to her sense of duty."

"But resistance will augment the admiration of the king, and consequently her influence."

"No; the king, ashamed of his own weakness, will be less disposed to admire her; he will imagine himself less beloved, and from this idea he will love her less. Besides, if the king presume to offer an imprudent and culpable proposal, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, convinced of the nature of his sentiments will distance herself from him. The king will sigh, weep, and forget her."

"The chances are in favour of the result of this project; the plan is excellent, I will labour with ardour and dexterity; I will give your eminence an account of my success, for I venture to predict it"

"Do not hurry, do not precipitate your measures, take ample time; the art of insinuation requires it. When that argument with which you seek to persuade, appears to fail, assume an air of indifference, and pursue it under another form. Remember that princes, the least informed, have yet always some general maxims instilled into their minds, which will not allow of their being sufficiently guided on certain occasions. For instance, they always know, that to gain them, their passions are flattered: there are some common-

place observations derived from books which create some few fears : avoid appearing the flatterer when you enter into the sentiments of the king : know how to dissent without contradicting, and appear bold and independent as without risking any thing : appear austere in your general principles, and that the warmth of zeal carries you away only under particular circumstances. Princes scarcely believe the existence of friendship or sympathy : and what appears most singular, they are quite ready to confide in unreserved devotion. Accustomed from their earliest infancy to every homage, they often see in the sincere expressions of sensibility only servile language ; they are perhaps too guarded against flattery, but they are not equally so against exaggeration ; they appear to think that we should not venture to conceive an idea of imposing upon them to a great extent ; they have the simplicity to suppose some bounds to actual falsehoods ; besides, friendship demands a reciprocity that they are sensible cannot exist with them. Devotion is an abandonment, a worship, an idolatry, which does not require an equal return ; and this, doubtless, is because princes readily believe that they are adored ; but they rarely flatter themselves they are beloved. I have unveiled to you, Boisenvil, important secrets ; you have address, intelligence, and you are yet young ; therefore profit by them. Intimate acquaintance with a weak and mistrustful prince, whom we are anxious to govern, is an excellent school to form and perfect finesse of mind. To how much art, precaution, prudence, just observation, and suppleness, must we have recourse with them ! It is absolutely necessary to conceal from the object the yoke under which he bows ; princes will more readily pardon our exerting all our powers against

them, than our presuming to have the appearance of knowing of that power; but when once an empire is fully established, then let the most audacious outrage succeed to timid measures, impudence then gives *eclat* to power and no authority is real without grandeur."

It was thus in the recesses of his private cabinet that Richelieu unveiled to his confidant his at once supple and domineering spirit, his ambitious and arrogant soul.

Boisenval minutely obeyed the orders of the cardinal; he raised the passion of the king yet higher, and in a few months he succeeded in gaining his entire confidence.

Louis always kept by Mademoiselle de la Fayette within the bounds of the strictest delicacy, suffered all the torments of the most painful constraint, and at length complained to Boisenval of the insupportable *rak* he endured in his interviews with her.

Boisenval replied, that he who exclusively possessed the heart of her he loves, and commanded her esteem, could with ease obtain his every wish, and that therefore Mademoiselle de la Fayette would at last be brought to grant the king private interviews. The king, seduced by this language, consigned himself without further resistance to the indulgence of the sweetest expectations.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was so deeply affected by the conduct, and, above all, by the tender affection of the king, that she at length believed the attachment she felt for him ought to supersede all that was due to herself. When it is the heart which calculates on ingratitude, how immense does the debt appear!

Nevertheless Mademoiselle de la Fayette was not exempt either from affliction, nor from vague and confused inquietude; each interview with the

king appeared at once to heighten her happiness and augment her agitation. She had begun to embrace a high idea of the rectitude and honour of the king, so much so, that she found it impossible to take alarm at the sentiment he evinced for her : some months before, the expression of these sentiments would have rendered her a thousand times more disturbed, but now her enthusiasm for him had arisen to that lofty extent of exaltation, it no longer permitted the indulgence of a fear ! her sensibility had converted the king in her idea into a romantic and sublime hero ; she loved him the more, because she thought she possessed the secret key to unlock his perfections ; her heart and her imagination had deified him ! but she feared herself, she knew not what name to give to that imperious and exclusive sentiment which occupied her every thought, and completely ruled it ; she could no longer be blinded to the conviction that friendship was a weak name for such an attachment ; but she was re-assured by reflecting it was impossible for any being fully acquainted with all the good qualities of the king, to feel for him any other than extraordinary sentiment. She at last became tranquillized, at least for some time, by dwelling on the prudence and the superior mind of the king, and also upon the certain conviction that he expected nothing from her, and that he would never require any but the most innocent proofs of simple friendship.

However, the period of the queen's *accouchement* drew near, and the expectation of this important event engrossed the whole court. At last, upon the 5th of September, 1638, the wishes of France were gratified. The queen gave life at Saint Germain en Laye to an heir to the throne !

The birth of this prince, which had so long been ardently desired, overwhelmed the whole nation with joy ! a nation whose splendour and glory his reign was destined to augment in a future day. (10.)

The queen received in her chamber only the king, her own ladies, and the princesses of the blood ; but the unmarried princesses and the maids of honour were in an adjoining apartment.

As soon as the queen was brought to bed, Mademoiselle de la Fayette followed the princesses and her companions into the chamber of the queen.—This princess (having arrived at the most auspicious moment of her life) was yet in the arms of the king, whose countenance was bathed in tears as he pressed her to his bosom ! Louis, wholly occupied with her and his infant, did not even perceive Mademoiselle de la Fayette ; she did not obtain one look from those eyes suffused with tears, which, generally, had always sought her !—In this solemn moment, Louis was the husband and the father ! Inaccessible to any other sensation, he entirely resigned himself to those emotions which the claims of nature inspired—even love was suspended in his heart !

This affecting sight made the most melancholy impression upon Mademoiselle de la Fayette ; it seemed to her that she was then only a stranger in that chamber which she had entered with such lively joy !—She at last knew how much the sacred ties of husband and of father are above all others ; she suffered the greatest torment that a generous soul can sustain,—that of feeling herself capable of an unjust sentiment : she envied the queen ; she was irritated against the king.

This emotion, so unworthy of her, could not remain in a heart like hers ; but it left behind a cut-

ting remorse, an inexpressible dejection, and the most melancholy train of reflections.

The queen, penetrated by the touching sensibility the king had evinced, was in a very different disposition of mind ; she called Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and pressed her hand, saying—

“ I am sure that you participate in my happiness !”

Mademoiselle de la Fayette turned pale ; these words pierced her heart ; she recalled what she had just felt.

The dauphin had been carried into a large apartment adjoining, and the king proposed to Mademoiselle de la Fayette and many others to go and see him. He gave his arm to Mademoiselle de la Fayette ; he spoke a few sentences very low, they were replete with the most touching language that tender regard and gratitude for her counsels could dictate. He softened her, he fascinated her, and she remained only discontented with herself.

All the doors of the apartment were thrown open ; and almost instantly a crowd of people rushed forward to gain admission into it ; the hussars would have repulsed them, but the king cried out, “ Let them enter :—this child appertains to the whole world * !”

These striking words, and perhaps the only popular ones which had ever issued from the lips of this prince, transported Mademoiselle de la Fayette ! by an involuntary movement she tenderly pressed the arm of the king, who surprized and overjoyed, in his turn regarded her with an impassioned look.

* Historical.

Confused as much as disturbed, she withdrew her arm; but she was soon diverted from this embarrassment by the universal enthusiasm which was manifested for the king! The few words he had just pronounced had gained him the hearts of all; with loud acclamations they thanked and applauded him; they wept, they offered up a thousand touching prayers for the young prince.

In the midst of this tumult, an old man of eighty years approached the cradle, and surveying the dauphin with eyes filled with tears, exclaimed, "Behold the hope of our children!—Oh! pledge of peace and prosperity!"—he continued lifting up his hands, "in the name of all fathers of families, and of all good citizens, I bless thee! Mayest thou live longer than I have lived! Mayest thou see all the enemies of our country humiliated, conquered; and the French nation wisely submissive and faithful to religion and their sovereign!" The action of this old man, his white locks, his venerable figure, and his solemn tone, inspired the most lively sensations; he was a man of the lower class who spoke, but he was listened to with as much respect as emotion.

When the crowd was dispersed, the king took the dauphin in his arms, and carried him to the queen, that he might be put in her bed. All the ladies of the court entered the chamber of the queen; when the king, turning towards them, said, "I have been informed, that at my birth, the king, my father, embraced all the ladies whom he found in the chamber of the queen* ; and it is a privilege," he added, smiling. "I do not wish to forfeit."

With these words he embraced the Marchio-

* Historical.

ness of Senecé who was at his side, and making the round of the chamber, embraced successively all the ladies he passed.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was near the door, and one of the last ; all eyes were riveted upon her ; she wished not to appear embarrassed, but she was conscious the most vivid colour flushed her cheeks ; as the king approached her, this colour heightened.

At last the king came exactly before her—not daring to lower her eyes, nor to turn them she looked at him :—it was a look in which modesty and timidity were expressed with the most interesting sweetness, at the same time her countenance bore the impression of that degree of suffering which embarrassment always causes.

In this situation she appeared so lovely, that the king, indescribably struck, remained immovable. He viewed her for a moment with ecstasy then, without speaking, he gently took her hand, respectfully kissed it, and passed without embracing her.

What a distinction was this ! to what a degree did it wound all the young people assembled in this circle ! what a homage did love offer to modesty ! and how capable was Mademoiselle de la Fayette of supporting this delicacy !

It was midnight before they quitted the chamber of the queen ; a great many persons went into an adjoining room, of which one of the windows was open, the heat being excessive : the king obtained a moment's conversation with Mademoiselle de la Fayette by leading her to this open window ; when he said,

“ You now know all my respect for you, and the influence that a single look of yours has over me
A brother, however, may embrace his sister,—

and the sentiment that he feels would not be more pure than that you inspire in me: but your eyes told me I ought to submit—I confess also, that while contemplating the brilliance and freshness of those cheeks—that bland and lovely countenance, I thought that even the chastest kiss would have profaned them! and this sacrifice will at least obtain from you an unreserved confidence!”

“Ah!” replied Mademoiselle de la Fayette, “have you not long possessed my exclusive and boundless confidence? I could defy myself; but you, sire, oh! ever—”

“How happy you render me,” cried the king: “believe me, I could now lose nothing of your good opinion of my sentiments without becoming the most unfortunate of men! I know your sentiments for me, but it is impossible to describe mine for you: for how can we give an idea of that which is boundless and immeasurable? You exist independently of me; you have your individual characteristics, your particular taste, your own opinions—but I, ah! I am nothing but through you and for you! I have not one idea which does not appertain to you, not a sentiment which does not spring from you; it is your mind which enlightens me, it is your soul which animates me; I derive an inexpressible charm from the thought that all my meritorious actions proceed from your heart! Ah I no longer fear flattery: others may approve, it is only you who praise me. Resign yourself then to me without apprehension and without mistrust; it is to rest on virtue, it is to confide in yourself!”

There was in this discourse as much art as passion. Louis was anxious to prepare Mademoiselle for the strangest proposal: drawn on, seduced by love, and encouraged by the subtle ad-

vice of Boisental, this prince had conceived a hope the most rash ; or rather it might be said, certain of being beloved, he did not doubt success in the request he was about to make.

Nevertheless he still hesitated for some time : but, five days after the *accouchement* of the queen, always stimulated by Boisental, and taking decidedly his resolution, he no longer deferred the execution of his design. One morning in the apartment of the queen, Louis, at the end of one of his usual conversations with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, told her that he had a favour to ask of her.

" I am rejoiced at it," she replied, " but how is it possible I have not been able to divine any thing dependent upon myself which could afford you pleasure ?"

" It depends entirely upon yourself ; you promise me, then, to grant it ? Is there any necessity to promise it ? give me your word."

" I give it from the bottom of my soul. Speak, sire."

" No, it would require too long an explanation ; I will acquaint you with it by writing ; you will receive a letter this evening—but remember your word that you have just pledged, and reflect that if you fail, you will plunge me into the most violent despair."

Saying this, the king rose and quitted her. Mademoiselle de la Fayette remained astonished, but without inquietude : the idea that the king could ask any thing unbecoming, did not for a moment enter her imagination ; but she was very curious to know the secret : her mind was full of conjectures about it—conjectures which had no connexion with the truth. At last, in the evening, she found a letter at her house from the

king ; she hastily opened it, and read its contents with the most sorrowful surprise.

“ If we had for each other only a common friendship, and if you did not perfectly know my heart, the proposal I am about to make might appear imprudent and ill-advised ; but you know that it is impossible you could be guilty of *imprudance* with me, and to an attachment like mine you ought to resign yourself with the blindest confidence.

“ What have I said ? your confidence cannot be that in me : you cannot be ignorant of the purity, the delicacy of my attachment, and your supreme influence over me ; you cannot be ignorant that when you have wished to repress an involuntary declaration, a single look from you has sufficed. For two years, during which I have exclusively loved you, I have never been able to speak to you without witnesses, except twice ; and even then I owed that invaluable happiness to chance. It is quite impossible for me to support this odious restraint much longer. I have made arrangements at my hunting-lodge, at Versailles, to render it according to your taste ; you will find there flowers, a garden, a meadow, and a wood ; come then and embellish this asylum, and render it the temple of friendship. (11.)

“ You can bring hither those individuals of your society whom you love the most, and you will pass thus three or four days every week ; there we may converse without witnesses, and you will at once complete my gratitude and my happiness ! What would you fear ?—Calumny ? she will not dare to attack you, she cannot attain you. Lastly, I claim your word, because I am certain that you will confide in my principles, and my honour. Re-

flect that your refusal would be an outrage that would wring my soul and destroy all my happiness?"

After having read this letter, Mademoiselle de la Fayette remained as if annihilated ! the fatal bandage, which, for such a length of time, had veiled the truth, fell at once from her eyes !—no more illusion remained, no more possibility of self-deception on that sentiment which had dictated this letter ; it was written by a lover who thought and expressed himself as such, and a lover so seduced by passion that he had lost every idea of decency.

To complete her grief, Mademoiselle de la Fayette could not but acknowledge, in the recesses of her own heart, a culpable reciprocity of this fatal passion.

"Just Heaven !" she exclaimed, "with what a tone of assurance and of authority he proposes my dishonour ! What reputation would not be sullied by such conduct ? What ! at my age, for me to establish myself in that house, to meet the king tête-à-tête ! Behold then this attachment that I believed so pure ! What ! shall I authorize an aduletrous love ?—Unhappy wretch, I partake it ! Ah, I only wished to deceive myself !—When I recal so many passionate interviews, it is scarcely possible to believe I ever could have been self-deceived. But what can I say in reply ? Oh, desolating thought ! I am about to incense and to reduce him to despair." This idea completely overthrew all Mademoiselle de la Fayette's fortitude, all her courage failed, and love ruled despotic. Irrevocably resolved to act in no respect unworthy of herself, she at least wished for the means, if it were possible, of softening the dreadful blow with which she must assail the king.

She shuddered on re-perusing the last sentence of the letter—

“Reflect, that a refusal would be an outrage that would wring my soul, and destroy all my happiness !”

“My attachment,” she said, “has then served only to cause his misery.—Ah ! I could, without effort, sacrifice my repose, my happiness, my life to him ; but my reputation and his, my honour !—To foster an adulterous passion, and to become an open scandal to France, to play the ignominious part of a declared mistress—to have at least every appearance of it ; to become an object of the most deserved contempt !—And is it *he* who has proposed such a debasement !—Alas doubtless he would always be with me delicate and respectful ; he at least thinks he is so ; but when love can lead him astray so far as to annihilate every idea of delicacy, and all apprehension of public condemnation,—how can such resolutions and such promises be relied on ? And if he were honourable, who would believe it ? There is indeed but too much cause to break so criminal a connexion, when I am at length become sensible of his sentiments and my own !

“In what security I have slept on the brink of an abyss ! with what delight have I contemplated the future, coloured by fancy, and now covered with a veil so dark and sad ! Prospects so dear to my heart, ye are then only chimeras !—I will resign myself to my melancholy fate, I will weep, I will suffer even till I sink into the grave ! Ah, of what consequence, if I could be assured of his happy destiny.

“But the king, what will become of him ? Into what dejection, into what melancholy will my departure plunge him ? he will accuse me of cruel-

ty, of ingratitude, while I shall die overwhelmed with misery! he will complain of me, he will mourn a friendship the admiration of his people even glory: yes, if he would fulfil his right destiny, if the French would do justice to his great qualities, I would support his absence with courage, and even the loss of his affection. But how can I renounce the hope that I had conceived, those projects which I have embosomed? how can I sustain the desponding idea that he will sink into indolence, that he will remain under the yoke of an insolent minister, and that history will never record him among her great monarchs?—Each reflection increases the terrific bitterness of my regrets; I have no thought divested of melancholy. “Unfortunate prince!” she continued, shedding a torrent of tears; “Oh! thou whom I have loved, whom I have always regretted—Alas! you will preserve of me only an embittered remembrance, and perhaps a hateful one. Our hearts will then cease to understand each other, they will no longer mutually respond!—Ah! if thou couldst but know to what excess I love thee!—Ah! why, in for ever quitting thee, can I not indulge this only consolation? But can I hope to assuage thy ills in avowing the grief which destroys me? The pity alone which it must inspire, would overwhelm thee. No, no, I love better to see thee unjust than to aggravate thy pangs!”

Mademoiselle de la Fayette passed the whole night in this dreadful state, resolved to fly, to quit all; but not knowing, and being unable to determine on what method to embrace to announce her resolution to the king. Madame de Beaumont was at Paris: besides, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, though she felt for her the tenderest

friendship, could not avoid discovering that the marchioness had always judged with too much lenity of her connexion with the king.

A great soul will never be precipitated by too much indulgence into vice ; but yet it may have its most generous resolutions weakened, or at least retarded by it.

If Mademoiselle de la Fayette, at this period, had received on this subject the advice of a man, courageous, and a more sincere friend, she would at once have quitted the court ; she would not have resisted her early scruples, nor been deaf to the voice of honour, which had so often conjured her to break off this seducing and dangerous connexion.

Her determination was taken ; it was to bury herself for ever in the midst of an estate a hundred leagues from Paris : there was nothing more to be resolved, but how she ought to conduct herself to prepare the king for this event, to ask permission of retreat from the queen, and to announce it to the court. She had indeed need of advice ; and at the moment not knowing whom to address, she resolved to pour all her mortal chagrins into the bosom of the virtuous Vincent de Paul. She knew that he had been for some days the superintendant guardian in the hospital established near Longchamps. She resolved to go there without delay. Having ordered a carriage and horses to be ready for her at St. Germain, she set out before the dawning of day. She experienced inexpressible anguish in passing through the town, and finding herself distant from the chateau. The profound obscurity of the night did not permit her to gain a last view of this edifice which she was probably never more to see !

If the pious Vincent advised her not to return to court, and to suppress unnecessary adieus, she was resolved to obey him ! Thus perhaps she fled, no more to return.—This thought, the darkness which surrounded her, and the noise made by the wheels of the carriage, painting to her imagination the rapidity of her movements, all united, on this dreadful night, to cause her as much agitation as grief ?

“Alas !” she exclaimed, “at this moment, a prince so worthy of being beloved, resigns himself in fond security to the sweets of sleep ! He sleeps, and I am flying from him : he slumbers, confiding in me, in my tenderness, and my devotion, and I abandon him for ever ! When he awakes, he will enquire for my answer, and what answer will he receive ! That cruel letter will reveal to him that I eternally renounce him, that I will never again behold him ! This terrible letter will be written by my own hand. Oh ! how is it possible to support such affliction and live ?” The head of the poor unfortunate fell on her shoulder as she was thus speaking—sobs stifled her voice—she remained motionless, sunk in the abyss of deep despair !

Day glimmered as Mademoiselle de la Fayette perceived the steeples of the convent of Longchamps. The most touching remembrances recurred to her imagination. She recalled that storm, during which Louis had with strong emotion borne her on, pressing her with transport to his breast ! She recalled the long conversation she had held with him in the convent, her oppressed heart was writhed ! At that moment she even felt an irresistible desire to enter into the convent.

She descended from the carriage, and leaving

her attendants at the outer door which was thrown open, she entered the church. She found in it only a sexton, lighting the wax-tapers of an altar, in which high mass was to be performed. The lamp of night suspended at the arch of the choir, was not yet extinct. Mademoiselle de la Fayette slowly advanced. Every thing brought to memory that memorable morning when her heart had been so deeply agitated; it seemed to her as if Louis was at her side, as if she heard his footsteps. Soon she reached that tomb where she had so fervently prayed! She stopped, then sunk upon her knees, and crossing her hands upon her breast, the striking memorials of the past made her shudder!

"No," she said, "it was not accident which caused that sacred veil to fall from his trembling hand, and rest on my head!"

After these words, she remained a moment buried in profound reflection. At last she exclaimed, "Oh infinite goodness! O my God, thou inspirest me!—I can keep my promise to grant him some solitary meetings. I can again behold him, I can receive him with propriety, and fearless of danger; it is only to sacrifice myself. Heaven be blessed! It shall be done. Great God! receive an irrevocable oath!"——

Having pronounced these words, she rose, filled with confidence and resolution: she then advanced before the altar, when mass was about to commence; and after joining in it, she summoned her attendants, re-ascended the carriage, and immediately proceeded to the hospital, where she expected to find Saint Vincent; but she was then informed he had returned to Paris, and without loss of time, she also took the same route.

She meditated the greatest of sacrifices; but

she felt at that moment a supreme joy in the thought that she could again behold the king, and give him useful counsel.

She was going to promise her God solemnly to renounce the world, to surrender up her liberty, and become a *religieuse* in the convent where she was brought up.

During the journey to Paris, Mademoiselle de la Fayette had time to combine and arrange all the particulars of her plan. Friendship was not forgotten. As Mademoiselle de la Fayette had only distant relations and some collateral branches of her family, with whom she was unacquainted, she resolved to give her whole fortune to Madame de Beaumont, and to arrange her marriage with St. Ibal. On arriving at Paris, she saw Vincent de Paul who approved her resolutions, her intentions, her sacrifice ; and who was commissioned to take the necessary steps to hasten the execution of it, which he fixed himself should take place in eight days. Mademoiselle de la Fayette required from him the greatest secrecy, and even towards Madame de Beaumont. When every thing was arranged, she wrote a letter to the king containing these words :—

“ Your majesty requires that our interviews should no longer pass beneath the observation of witnesses. Before knowing what was the nature of that which you required of me, I had promised to grant it ; I shall keep my word—but I venture to entreat of you, sire, that you would permit me to select the spot for these private interviews. In eight days the asylum which must receive us will be prepared, and I will be there. You will then know the full extent of my attachment and my boundless devotions !”

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She had this letter taken to Saint Germain, and at the same time she secretly sent a courier to the count de Soissons, to beg him to come and meet her at Paris, having something of importance to communicate to him.

Though she had no particular connexion with the count de Soissons, she had had the opportunity of rendering him many essential services through the king. She knew from Saint-Ibal, that the count was deeply affected by them, and that he was greatly attached to her. He hastened to her immediately, and Mademoiselle de la Fayette, after having made him promise inviolable secrecy, confided to him her immoveable resolution. He well knew it was useless to combat it; but he could not restrain his tears in reflecting that a woman so young and lovely, and of such superior merit, should bury herself for ever in a cloister. Unwilling to reveal the weakness of Louis, she simply said, that disgusted with the court and with the world, she wished eternally to separate from them.

She begged him without delay to speak to the count de Melcy, the father of Saint-Ibal, and inform him, that by a particular donation, Madame de Beaumont had acquired an estate, rented at thirty thousand livres, a house at Paris, and a country mansion. Mademoiselle de la Fayette sold her jewels and her plate to endow with them some hospitals and her own convent; the count de Soissons engaged to defray the expenses of the wedding: it was necessary that the marriage of the marchioness should take place at Vincennes, in the country seat of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, the eve of the day that she was to take the veil. The count undertook to arrange all that was indispensably necessary; and it was expedi-

ent that the prince, having the consent of the count de Melcy, should inform Saint-Ibal of this event, carefully concealing from him the donation of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, which was not to be revealed until the day subsequent to the marriage. The count, impressed with the deepest grief and strongest admiration of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, quitted her only to perform all she had desired and confided to his care.

Secrecy was indispensable for many reasons, but more particularly it was wished by Mademoiselle de la Fayette, to spare her those afflicting scenes which might have staggered her resolution, the opposition of the king, the regrets, the arguments, and the tears of Madame de Beaumont !

When all was arranged and settled, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, on being left to herself, felt an emotion of terror ; she feared to reflect upon the sacrifice that she was to consummate in eight days, and that she had till now only contemplated under the influence of that single idea, the tho't of again beholding the king.

" Alas !" said she, " it is not a pious vocation which leads me to the holy asylum ; it is a profane sentiment which leads me thither ! But at least my life is innocent, and my heart is pure. Religion will calm the cruel agitation of this too vulnerable heart, and it is that which will gather the fruits of a sacrifice that I make to friendship.—It is done ;—the engagement is irrevocable ! without reflection, and in the short space of a few hours I have sealed my fate ! And what destiny have I chosen ! At twenty-five years of age to renounce the whole world, to bury myself eternally in a cell . . . To submit myself to an absolute perpetual dependence, and to continual austerities !"

To desire nothing further of the world than to be forgotten long before death, and in the bloom of youth to live concealed in a profound eternal obscurity ! Each of these ideas heightened the throbbing of her heart and arteries, secret terrors seized her imagination. Shocked at her own thoughts, she repulsed them with horror, and casting herself upon her knees, cried out—

“ O my God ! I acknowledge that human motives, however generous they may be, cannot be sufficient in the greatest sacrifices to shield us from corroding regrets. Sanctify then, Oh God ! my resolutions, that religion may be my aim, that faith may sustain it, and that piety may become its recompense !” As she pronounced this prayer, she heard the voice of Madame de Beaumont, and rising precipitately, she wiped the tears from her weeping eyes, and less agitated, returned to her seat. She had sufficient resolution to conceal her grief, her painful secret, and to converse even tranquilly with the marchioness. The latter remarked some alteration in her countenance, but as she was accustomed to see her often plunged in melancholy, she was not alarmed by it.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who wished to take leave of the queen, had resolved to return to court the day before the eve of her sacrifice. She said, that business would detain her some days at Paris; the marchioness determined to attend her, and even to repair with her to Saint Germain : the two friends continued together the remainder of the day. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, notwithstanding the constraint she imposed upon herself, was sensible of a degree of pleasure and of gratification she had never before felt. She dwelt on the idea, that she was on the point of securing

to her the happiest fate ; this sweet idea was for her a soothing consolation.

The successive days Mademoiselle de la Fayette received many letters from the king, and their contents were calculated to wound her heart ! He thanked her in the most passionate terms for the *tete-a-tete* interviews she had promised him, and these letters were bedewed with the bitterest tears.

However, Mademoiselle de la Fayette went to the convent of the daughters of Saint Mary, in the suburbs of Saint Anthony, secretly to see the prioress ; on the other hand, the count de Soissons went to inform Mademoiselle de la Fayette that he had obtained the consent of the father of Saint-Ibal, that the latter was acquainted with it and intoxicated with joy.

“ It was expedient,” continued the prince, “ to tell the exact truth to count de Melcy under the seal of profound secrecy. I have shewn him the donation in proper form, that you have had drawn up. Self-interest will secure you his discretion ; besides, this marriage constitutes the happiness and the good fortune of his son, without dispossessing him of any thing himself during life. I undertake all the arrangement of the nuptials ; besides he will not be even present, for he has the gout and keeps his bed.

“ When I acquainted Saint Ibal, that I had arranged with his father that he should receive thirty thousand livres annually, he concluded that his father had made this offering ; he has been very much disturbed at one fancied obstacle that Madame de Beaumont opposed to him, but it has been explained away ; they are agreed, and no idea can be formed of the transports of their joy ; they wish to hasten to implore you to be present

at the important event ; and for myself," added the count, " I think only of their heroic benefactress, I can see but you alone, and I can only sigh !"

In fact, Madame de Beaumont and Saint-Ibal did come, and recounted to Mademoiselle de la Fayette all that, of which she was so much better informed than themselves.

The marchioness said in secret to her friend, that she was certain that it was herself who had engaged the count de Soissons to conduct this affair with such lively interest ; that she did not doubt the prince, though he did not wish it to be known, had conceived the generosity of giving to Saint-Ibal the greater part of the fortune secured to him, without which the count de Melcy would never have granted his consent. Mademoiselle de la Fayette indulged this idea, and asked only for the marriage to be celebrated at Vincennes at her country house, which was granted with pleasure.

Two days previous to the nuptials of Madame de Beaumont, Mademoiselle de la Fayette set out for Saint Germain with her and Saint-Ibal, as had been agreed upon. It was only in the morning Mademoiselle de la Fayette wished to avoid conversation with the king ; for these interviews were always longer and more intimate than those of the evening. During the journey the marchioness and Saint-Ibal were so exclusively engrossed with each other, that they never remarked either the abstraction or the sombre melancholy of their unhappy friend.

Arrived at Saint Germain, the two lovers conducted Mademoiselle de la Fayette into her apartment, where she arranged her dress, in order to appear in the circle of the queen.

Upon entering her chamber, Mademoiselle de

la Fayette saw with surprise a beautiful dress decorated with flowers ; it was a little attention of Madame de Beaumont to greet her arrival.

"Your two years of mourning," said she, "were finished while we were at Paris : and I shall have the gratification of seeing you appear in the circle of the queen this evening in a coloured garb. I wish to dress you myself, it is an art that you must have forgotten, I charge myself with the office."

Mademoiselle de la Fayette embraced her friend ; she smiled, but her eyes were full of tears, they were instantly engaged at the toilette ; she made no resistance.

Grace and beauty are valued at so high a price, that women the least frivolous are not free from a secret impulse of vanity on this point.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette (without being conscious of it) was not in reality sorry to appear at court for the last time with every advantage. To her dress were added all those jewels bequeathed her by her aunt, which she had never before worn ; when her toilette was completed, the Marchioness rallied her on the melancholy cast of her countenance, which she attributed to the weariness her long toilette had produced.

"It almost appears to me as if I were decking a victim !" she added, laughing.

At this speech, Mademoiselle de la Fayette could not restrain a heavy sigh which issue from the bottom of her heart !

"Come," continued the marchioness, "come, and be enlivened and animated by viewing yourself."

Saying this, she led her before a glass—soon she cast down her eyes, and turned aside her head to conceal the tears which coursed down her

cheeks. Madame de Beaumont dressed herself hastily ; at last she drew her friend into the queen's circle. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, for the first time seen in a brilliant dress, excited all that astonishment and admiration which is created by a new beauty ; she was just about retiring when she saw the king appear ; she turned pale, but when he approached, her colour deepened in her cheeks. The king could not restrain a start of surprise upon perceiving this celestial figure so equally dazzling as regularly and perfectly beautiful ! He felt in this moment so lively and so passionate a sentiment, that fearing entirely to betray himself, he merely asked her, in a very low voice, where was the spot of rendezvous on the day after the morrow, and what hour she would name ?

She replied, that he would be informed by a note the same evening, just before he retired to bed. The king thanked her with a look and an expression of joy which made her shudder !

In that moment it seemed to her that she deceived him, that she betrayed him : an inexpressible pulsation of the heart deprived her of almost all her resolution.

They conversed in the apartment only of her beauty. The king, who was cautious in speaking of it, caught the eyes of the count de Soissons ; he perceived him retired on one side to the embrasure of a window ; he approached him, but he had scarcely pronounced the name of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, when the count covered his eyes with both his hands, and melted into tears !

The king was affected, and he pitied him with the secret pride of a preferred lover. This unfortunate prince was very far from foreseeing, that even the attachment which he had inspired was

to be evinced by so extraordinary a devotion, as to consecrate to him the miserable remnant of her life !

The king, too much agitated to tarry long in the apartment, retired at an early hour. Mademoiselle de la Fayette was obliged to remain as usual, even to the moment when the queen retired to her chamber to sleep. After the queen had finished playing, according to custom, she remained in her cabinet with those persons who formed her particular society.

The cabinet fitted up with glass and gilding, was decorated with as much refined taste as magnificence : it was then that, at the moment, almost forgetting etiquette and laying aside state, the queen resigned herself to the fascination of conversation with the most pleasing and charming persons of her court.

The evening was torturing to Mademoiselle de la Fayette—all that she beheld, all that she heard, was to her a subject of regret and of pain.

The elegance of this apartment, all the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the arts, she admired for the last time ; she was hereafter to view only sombre dormitories, she was henceforth only to dwell in a cell !

The most death-like silence, or conversation the most insipid to her who had a taste for all those charms connected with the pleasures of genius, would succeed to those animated conversations so full of the agreeable and the delicate.

These thoughts successively and rapidly heightened that sad affliction which her sentiments for the king created ; they plunged her into a dejection it was impossible to dissemble, and which struck every one ; she pleaded a violent head-

ache as an apology for it. The queen at last retired to her chamber, when Mademoiselle de la Fayette requested a moment's audience, which was at once granted to her. When they were alone, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, after having begged the pledge of her royal word to keep that a secret for forty eight-eight hours, which she was then anxious to reveal, confessed that she was to take the veil the day after the next.

The commiseration of the queen equalled her surprise. Mademoiselle de la Fayette did not speak of the letter of the king, she therefore believed she only sacrificed herself from a sense of the danger of her own attachment! The queen, without being able to utter a word, embraced her with the tenderest expression, she held her a long time pressed within her arms, it was at once a testimony of admiration and of gratitude.

Yet the queen thought she ought to offer all the arguments that could be suggested on the sudden step she was about to take, and perhaps also she dwelt on them the more, as she saw from the first word that all remonstrance would be futile. The interview was tender and affecting; the queen, in ceasing to envy this interesting person, beheld in her only the most generous friend of Louis; she conjured her, and with sincerity, often to see the king at the grate, that she might continue to impress him with those counsels which had heretofore been of such utility; she promised also herself to visit her.

This conversation revived the courage of Mademoiselle de la Fayette: nothing so much soothes a dejected soul as the suffrage and marks of esteem from those who are revered.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was to sleep at Vincennes with Madame de Beaumont; she went

into her chamber only to write two lines to the king; she promised him an interview on the day after the morrow at noon in one of the parlours of the convent of the daughters of Saint Mary, in the suburbs of Saint Anthony; a convent which he knew according to the custom of the times, was often used as a retreat. The king was surprised and afflicted; the austerity of the place, and the idea that in these *tet-a-tetes* a double grate would separate him from Mademoiselle de la Fayette, caused in him real mortification and distress; but he admired the ingenious delicacy of her who had discovered these means of meeting him without any ground for scandal. He surmised nothing more, he had no suspicion of the sacrifice that Mademoiselle de la Fayette was about to offer. He should enjoy happiness for a while from conversations without constraint, and he flattered himself that in time he should obtain more.

However Mademoiselle de la Fayette set out for Vincennes at two hours after midnight.

Terrible was her affliction upon finding herself in that house which was so dear to her, and where she had collected so many touching memorials!—How many tears she shed in this cabinet filled with pictures which represented only the king!

“Dear prince,” she said, “nothing in my solitude will ever bring thee before my view but I shall carry thy image in the recesses of my heart, and severe duty will never be able to efface it for a moment! Oh! if, at least, before I quit thee, I could be permitted to describe all I feel.—But I renounce thee, and thou shalt never know to what extent thou art beloved!—I ought for the future even to suppress with thee the expression of a tender friendship!

“ Ah ! how can I assume this austere language ? How can I again see thee, listen to thee, reply to thee, with a calm countenance and with a tranquil tone !

While making these cruel reflections, she shed a deluge of tears.—Suddenly she recollected that she had yet another sacrifice to offer ; it was that of the letters of the king ! she took a candle, and lighted the fire, and her heart seemed to break as she beheld them burn ! It appeared to her that with these cherished letters every chimera of happiness was annihilated ! Seated motionless before this flaming heap, she contemplated it with maddening emotion !—After a long silence, she exclaimed—

“ Thus then so many touching professions, so many vows of eternal tenderness, produce but a passing and rapid flame, and evaporate in smoke ! There are only the ashes of them remaining.—Such are the sweetest illusions of life !”

Mademoiselle de la Fayette, absorbed in affliction, remained in this room until the dawn ; when she went into her chamber, and threw herself upon the bed, but without any hope of enjoying a moment's sleep. She removed the beautiful covering of embroidered silver which lay over the wooden stool of the king, on which he sat as he rocked the little twins of the cottage. The rusticity of this piece of furniture allowed of her carrying it with her, it was a consolation to think that she could place in her cell that which was pregnant with such sweet remembrance ! She placed on this seat the little crucifix lapis lazuli, left her by the countess de Brégy, and she said—

“ Behold all my riches ! It is on this seat I shall every day sit in silent meditation ! And this crucifix destined to receive the last prayers of

sensitive and suffering hearts will rest upon my bosom even to my last moments ! I will invoke the Supreme Power for me—for the king—and for France !”

At nine o'clock in the morning Mademoiselle de la Fayette, rallying all her courage, wished upon this day to be entirely engaged with the happiness of her friend. At ten o'clock the count de Soissons arrived with Saint-Ibal: the count knowing that Mademoiselle de la Fayette destined her diamonds to some works of charity, brought to her a box containing some valuable jewels and some superb stones, and he offered it to Madame de Beaumont.

At noon the two lovers were united in the chapel of the house ; only twelve persons were invited. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, throwing aside every consideration of self, appeared calm ; she entered with grace into the general gaiety, and performed the honours of the house with all that charm of manner so natural to her : nevertheless, notwithstanding the consolation she found in the happiness of creating the felicity of her friend, yet this captivating picture of a happy and legitimate love, pierced her soul with grief !

She mentally said, “ shall they be partakers of all the happiness that can be tasted on earth ? as for myself, I shall only know the torture of an acute and profound sensibility !”

In the evening, all the nuptial party assembled round a table at play, with the exception of count de Soissons and of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who retired to a terrace at the side of the apartment.

The count, who had not been able to surmount the grief with which he was overwhelmed, experienced a sweet though melancholy gratification

in mingling his tears with hers, and expressing to her his admiration !

“ I think with terror of the morrow !” he said to her ; “ of that dreadful day in which you will at once abandon, never to return thither, that court, and that world, of which you are the loveliest ornament ! I shall however take an opportunity, after your departure, of declaring to Saint-Ibal and your friend all that they owe you ! I shall enjoy their gratitude, and even have a gratification in their grief : I shall undertake to deliver an eulogium worthy of you, and I shall see your sublime virtue admired as highly as it merits.”

If even frivolous eulogiums are not quite indifferent, what impression might be produced by such praises as are deserved ? Pride had never been attached to Mademoiselle de la Fayette ; it was thought that no person well born, and in her situation, would have conducted herself with so little, but yet she felt fortified by the idea that a true friend would display her virtues, which henceforth must consist in that fortitude which is the result of sincere piety.

When all the party in the house had retired, Mademoiselle de la Fayette wrote to her friend a long letter as touching as explicit, which she left at Vincennes with orders not to deliver it before noon the next day. At last she set out purposing to sleep at Paris.

The following morning, as soon as day dawned, she repaired to her convent ; she had been expected, and all was in readiness for her reception.

She had passed a part of the night at prayers ; her heart suffered, but the elevation of her ideas had entirely banished from her imagination every secret inclination towards the world and its vain

delights, and had wholly effaced frivolous regrets. She was softened, but not dejected. It was not the last retreat of criminal disgraceful love, it was not repentance which had led her into this holy asylum: irreproachable and pure, she felt all the dignity of her sacrifice, and at this solemn moment the enthusiasm of virtue freed her lofty soul from the agitations of unhappy passion!

This sweet calm became yet more perfect when she had received the veil and the sacred fillet; she thought herself transformed! Each heavenly gift began to descend into this soul, so deserving to receive and to taste them! A delightful peace banished trouble and inquietude for ever; fixed in a state of the highest perfection, she found herself tranquil and free; she was astonished that this sacrifice had not been the free choice of her own inclination, and far from thinking that she was devoted by renouncing all the dangerous illusions of the world, it seemed as if she came to disengage herself from the most troublesome shackles and heaviest fetters! As she contemplated the past, she saw a stormy sea, pregnant with rocks almost inevitably destructive, and she anticipated with joy in future only a sure and peaceable road, terminated by a perspective brilliant in light, in glory, and in happiness!

At noon the king arrived, having still no suspicion of his misfortune. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, being informed of it, repaired to the parlour. At the sight of this celestial figure, clad in a robe of coarse black cloth, and whose fascinating countenance was covered with a long white veil, the king remained terrified, his eyes riveted upon her!

"Forgive me," she said to him in a calm tone,

full of sweetness, "for having thus disposed of myself without your knowledge.—Sire, too much sensibility was leading us into a dangerous path; the letter, in which your majesty, for the first time in your life, forgetting all the laws of propriety, proposed to establish me at Versailles—this fatal letter cleared my blinded vision! I had promised to grant your request, I could only maintain my word by enclosing myself within a cloister; I have this morning taken the veil; and that irrevocable vow, which will be publicly pronounced in one year, is already registered in my heart!"

"Heavens!" exclaimed Louis, "is it a vision, is it an angel who appears to me?"

"It is a friend," she replied, "who consecrates herself to pray for France and for you! To invoke the deity to enable her to hold only religious conversation with you, to remind you of your duties, or to preserve an eternal silence; to lend attention only to the praises of God, or to listen to you, to see only you, or the holy virgins consecrated to the Lord; to forget all vain worldly pleasures, and all frivolous objects, to be engrossed only by religion and you; such is my vocation! Ah! is it not a noble destiny?"

"But," cried the king, in a voice interrupted by sobs, "these fatal grates which will separate us for ever!"—

"No; the tomb itself could not separate us: it is in elevation, in refinement, that our souls can be completely united."

At these words, the king in tears fell upon his knees—"Oh! you," he said, "sole object of all the affections of this lacerated heart! you whom I in secret would adore! at your feet I abjure that profane sentiment which, notwithstanding every

effort, and so long a time unknown to me, seduced my reason!—The heroism of your virtue has triumphed over love itself. I no longer see in you aught but a celestial object! Yes, this sweet look, this angelic expression, under the religious veil, could henceforth only cause grief and agitation to a vicious or depraved hart; it is sufficient to gaze on you, to adore innocence! But what shall I become in that court where you will be no more? I can only find consolation in imitating you, in regulating my life by yours, in retiring for ever to the profound solitude of a cloister.” (12.)

“What do you say? Oh Heaven!” interrupted Mademoiselle de la Fayette, “you who are a king, a father a spouse, and you would wish to bury yourself in a monastery.—Ah! sire, what is in me a noble sacrifice, in you would be only a shameful desertion! Reflect that I could save my reputation and tranquilize my conscience by going into retirement for some years, but I wished to preserve for you a friend, whose counsels you consider useful, and therefore have I renounced the world and my liberty. Your glory is the only happiness which remains for me, that alone can recompense such a devotion!

“Alas!” replied the king, “you have acquired the right to dispose of my fate, but at least refrain from believing it ever can be happy.

“No,” cried Mademoiselle de la Fayette, “no; the happiness of a sovereign cannot depend on an individual affection; such great destiny should be attached only to the public welfare. Sire, France will become itself—you will vanquish all your enemies, and, after some triumphs, worthy of immortalizing the supreme chief of this generous nation, you will conclude by reaching the zenith of your

own glory, in securing to your subjects the sweetest recompense of their devotion, the noblest reward of your labours—an honourable and permanent peace !”

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

NOTES

TO THE FIRST VOLUME.

[1.] *Page 12.*

ON reading all the memoirs of that time, it is impossible not to do justice to the purity of conduct and the virtue of the princess.—Some verses of Voiture have been quoted against her with very little reason or sense, as they seem rather to prove that her conduct was universally acknowledged to be irreproachable: first, because Madame de Motteville, who was so sincere an admirer of the virtues of that princess, introduces them into her *Memoirs*; secondly, because Voiture addressed this impromptu to the queen herself, after she had become regent, with extreme devotion.—Certainly he never would have had the audacity and the folly to recal the memory of the foolish passion of the duke of Buckingham, if this passion, even in the opinion of a few persons, had cast the slightest stain on the queen's reputation. The occasion of these verses was this:

“The queen, after she was regent (says Madame de Motteville,) to prove to the dutchess d'Aguillon, the favourite niece of the late cardinal de Richelieu, that she preserved no resentment, treated her with a remarkable distinction: she continued to her the government of Havre, bestowed on her by the cardinal; a proceeding sufficiently singular to admit of its being called in question without animosity. The queen borrowed for some days from the dutchess the beautiful house of Ruel left her by the cardinal: it was impossible for Anne of Austria, then all powerful, to be without emotion in this place, where cardinal Richelieu, her enemy, had so long received the homage of all France. On going over the apartments, she stopped before the portrait of the cardinal, and said: ‘If this great politician were in existence, he should still be with my will, the Master of France, which he was so worthy of governing.’”

Admirable expressions ! which displayed so much greatness of soul, and the praise-worthy desire of excusing the absolute empire which Louis XIII. allowed this minister to exercise.

As the queen was one day parading the gardens of Ruel in a *caleche* with the princess, she perceived Voiture walking about with a thoughtful air. The princess, who was fond of Voiture, persuaded the queen to speak to him ; and the queen asked him what he was thinking of. After a moment's reflection Voiture returned the following verses for answer :

Je pensois que la destinée
Après tant d'injustes malheurs,
Vous a jus te ment couronnée
De gloire, d'éclat et d'honneurs.
Mais que vous étiez plus heureuse
Lorsque vous étiez autrefois,
Je ne veux pas dire amoureuse ;
La rime le veut, toutelois

Je pensois que ce pauvre amour,
Qui toujours vous prêta ses armes,
Est banni loin de votre cour,
Sans ses traits, son arc et ses charmes,
En quoi pourrois je profiter
En passant près de vous ma vie,
Si vous pouvez si mal traiter
Ceux qui vous ont si bien servie ?

Je pensois,...(nous autres poëtes
Nous pensons extravagamment)
Ce que, dans l'humeur où vous êtes,
Vous feriez, si dans ce moment,
Vous avisiez en cette place
Venir le duc de Buckingham :
Et lequel seroit en disgrâce
Du duc, ou du père St. Vincent.

The queen only saw in this pleasantry a jeu d'esprit, with which she was so much pleased, that she wished to have the verses written out, and she gave copies of them to several persons. Twelve or fifteen years afterwards her taste, which was then altogether perfect, would have made these verses, though ingenious, appear very indifferent to her,

and the pleasantry infinitely too familiar; but the manner in which she received them is a complete proof of her innocence, and shews that her conduct was completely secure from every injurious suspicion. Accordingly, the reputation of this princess has never been attacked, except in libels, and a few contemptible romances.

[2.] Page 15.

Gaston d'Orleans, brother of Louis XIII. was a prince of an undecisive and weak character, governed by his favourites, and particularly by the Abbé de la Revière. This prince is admirably well painted in the *Memoires* of the cardinal de Retz.—The famous Mademoiselle de Montpensier was the daughter of Gaston d'Orleans.

Louis de Bourbon, count de Soissons, was the son of Charles count de Soissons, who entertained a strong passion for Catharine de Bourbon, the sister of Henry IV. Louis count de Soissons, was born at Paris in 1604. He distinguished himself against the Hugonots at the siege of Rochelle, and in a number of other engagements. Having refused to marry one of the nieces of the cardinal de Richelieu, he was persecuted, and conspired against that minister: he failed in the conspiracy, made his escape, entered into a treaty with the enemy, and was killed at the battle of la Marfée. Varicarville and Saint-Ibal were attached to him. The cardinal de Retz, in his *Memoires*, praises the merit, the activity, and the talent of Saint Ibal.

Charles de la Porte, duke de la Meilleraye, was indebted for a remarkably great fortune to his merit, his courage, and the favour of the cardinal de Richelieu, his relation: he was knight of the order of the Holy Ghost, [Saint Esprit], in 1636, and the following year grand-master of the artillery. He possessed great military talents, and performed several memorable exploits. In 1639, after the taking of Hesdin, he received the staff of marshal of France on the breach of that place, from the hands of Louis XIII. He died full of honours, merited by glorious actions and great services, in 1664, at the age of sixty-two. His son married Hortense Mancini, the niece of cardinal Mazarin, and succeeded to the name of Mazarin.

The commander de Jars, connected with all the enemies of the cardinal, and probably entrusted with their secrets, passed eleven months in a dungeon in the Bastille; from thence he was sent to Troyes to be tried: on quitting the

Bastille, he saw on the steps before the building several prisoners, who were his friends, and among others, the marshal de Bassompierre:—

“Adieu,” said he, “I know not where I am going; but you may be assured that whatever happens to me I am a man of honour; I shall never be wanting either to my friends or myself”

He kept his word. He underwent a number of questions, always answered with firmness, never contradicted himself, or betrayed any fear. They wished to extort from him, by threatening him with death, the secrets of the queen, and the intrigues of the dutchess de Chevreuse, and Chateaufort, the keeper of the seals devoted to the dutchess of whom he was amorous. The commander knew of all these intrigues, without having himself any share in them; but his discretion was not to be shaken. Laffemas, an iniquitous judge, sold to the cardinal, caused the commander to be sentenced to death by a corrupted tribunal, and he was led to the very scaffold. The cardinal, who knew his innocence, had merely wished to frighten him. At the very moment he supposed he was going to be beheaded he received his pardon. He travelled, and afterwards returned to the court.

Roger de Bellegarde, duke and peer, and *grand écuyer* of France, was loaded with estates and honours under four kings, Henry III. Henry IV. Louis XIII. and Louis XIV. during the regency. He was celebrated for his gracefulness and for his gallantry which he prolonged under their reigns. He was beloved by Gabrielle d’Estrées; more than thirty years afterwards by Mademoiselle de Guise, who was then in all the splendour of her early youth, and who found a rival in her mother. He ended by declaring a passionate sentiment for Anne of Austria. He died in 1646, at the age of eighty-three: thus he lived during three years of the regency of Anne of Austria. He left no posterity.

Leon, count de Chavigny, was the son of Claude Bothillier, secretary of Holve. Chavigny owed his fortune and his talents to the favour of Richelieu. Louis XIII. in his testament nominated him one of the council of the regency but Anne of Austria, who did not like him, kept him back from affairs. Chavigny died in 1652, at the age of forty-four. Chavigny had a brother, who was the father of the famous Abbé de Rancé.

Mary Rohan Montbazou, dutchess de Chevreuse, was

born in 1600, married in 1617 Charles d'Albeit, duke de Luynes, constable of France, and the favourite of Louis XIII. After the death of the constable, she re-married in 1622 Claude de Lorraine, duke de Chevreuse, formerly prince de Joinville, and the lover of the marchioness de Verneuil, and rival of Henry IV. The duke de Chevreuse much older than she was, died in 1657, at the age of seventy-nine. The abilities of the dutchess de Chevreuse are praised by the cardinal de Retz, as superior to those of any other woman of that age. She was several times exiled. Piety at length deprived her of her relish for intrigue. She died in 1679. Through her the dutchy of Chrevreu came to the children of the first marriage. She had only three daughters in her second; two of them took the veil, and the third died unmarried.

[3.] Page 22.

This Doctor Morin, the eldest of sixteen children, was a botanist and physician. Having obtained the situation of Physician to the Hotel Dieu, he bequeathed to that hospital all the money he received of his pension. Those acts of charity were then common among all classes. The anecdote of religious firmness which I have attributed to Madame de Brégi belongs to Mademoiselle de Guise, of whom Morin was the physician; and in addition Mademoiselle de Guise subjoined a codicil to her settlement, by which she bequeathed an annuity of two thousand livres to Dr. Morin during his life. This physician, who lived the life of a saint, and in continual abstinence, died in 1715, at the age of eighty. See his *Eloge* by Fontenelle.

[4.] Page 27.

M. de Charbonnière, in his *Essay on the Sublime*, has made a very interesting episode of the Treaty; only he has changed the name of the heroine, whom he calls *Ceselli*, and the reason of this may be easily conceived.

Towards the end of the same century other women of illustrious birth made a display of equally brilliant examples of extraordinary courage: Phillis de la Tour-du-Pin de la Charce, on the irruption of the duke of Savoy into Dauphiny, in 1692, ordered the villages of the canton to take arms, put herself at their head, gave several battles in the

defiles of the mountain, and contributed by her intrepidity to make the enemy abandon the country. For these actions she received a pension from Louis XIV. was besides allowed to place her sword, her pistols, and the escutcheon of her arms, in the treasury of Saint Denis. Her mother and sister at the same time performed several similar actions. All these numerous circumstances, which took place in so religious an age, prove that religion, which in itself elevates every action, gives at the same time a sublime energy to the soul. For instance, what an exaltation religion formerly gave to all the chivalrous virtues! What constancy in enterprise, and fidelity in engagements!

[5.] PAGE 53.

If I were to cite all the praise-worthy anecdotes of this period, my book would be a history and not a novel; I should have no room for the insertion of my fictions. The following trait of that time deserves to be related.

During the siege of Cazal, M. de Toiras, the commandant of the place, after having melted all his plate, was obliged to melt also a piece of cannon, to be coined, to supply the want of money. A rich merchant of Cazal undertook to withdraw all this money from circulation, and pay the value of it. After the siege it amounted to two hundred and fifty thousand livres. This assurance extricated the commandant from his embarrassment, and the soldiers were completely paid. The name of the generous merchant was Georges Rossi. M. de Toiras, on leaving Cazal, immediately thought of requiting the merchant, and on his arrival at the camp of the marshal de Shomberg, he demanded from him the two hundred and fifty thousand livres, which the marshal refused: on this the camp began to murmur, and unanimously consented rather to renounce their pay, than that M. de Toiras should break his word. Rossi was reimbursed.

The noble defence of Cazal and several other exploits, procured the staff of Marshal of France for M. de Toiras, which was bestowed on him by Louis XIII. notwithstanding the opposition of Richelieu by whom he was hated. His brother embraced the party of the Duke of Orleans, the cardinal's enemy. Toiras was disgraced, deprived of his pensions and his government. The enemies of France made him the most brilliant offers, which this great man

rejected, justly thinking that nothing in the world can authorize the bearing arms against our country.

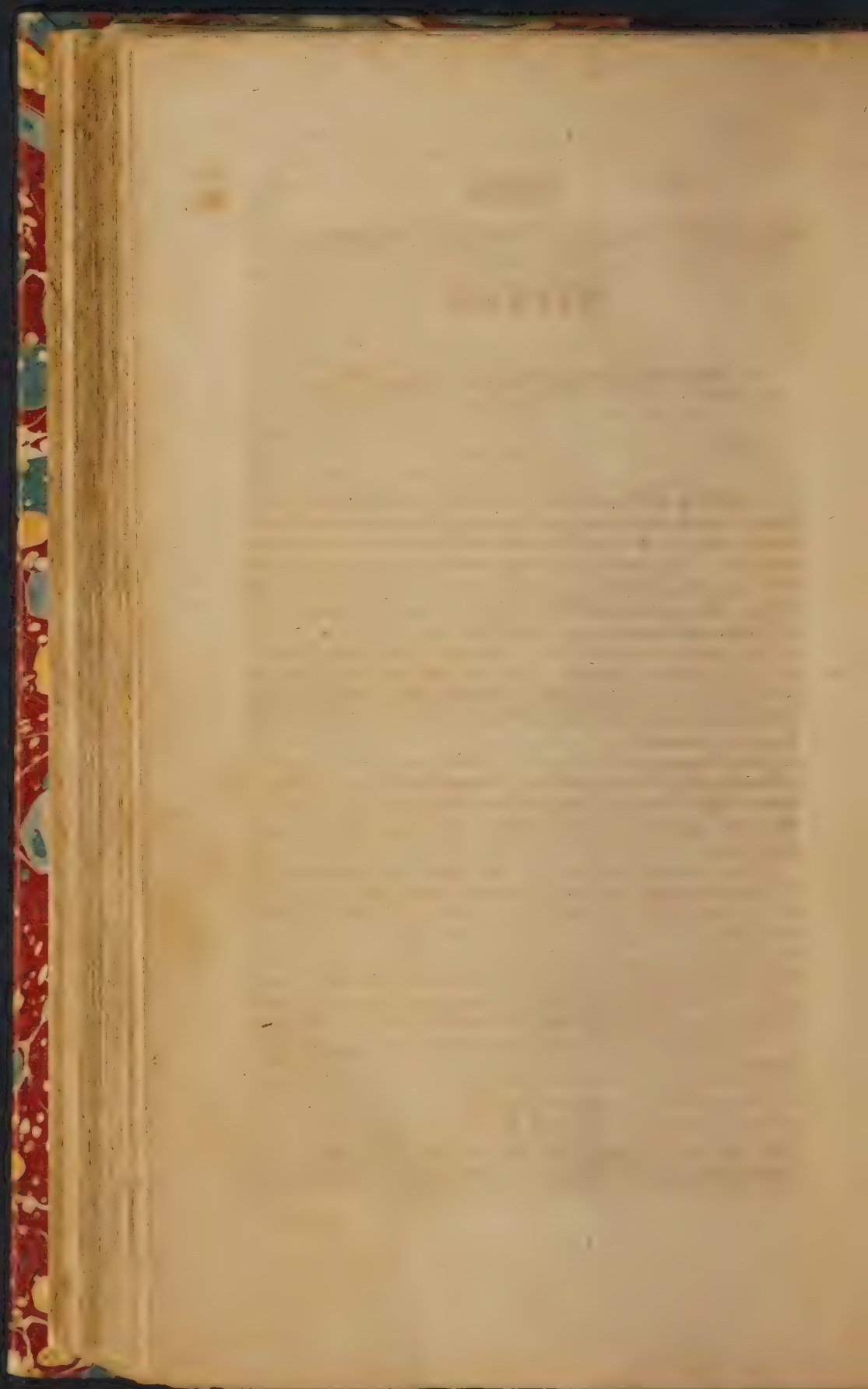
[6.] Page 88.

Saint Francis de Sales was of an illustrious family, and possessed a great talent for preaching: he seldom preached in towns, dreading lest the applause of men should deprive him of the fruit of his labours; but he went about among the villages, instructing the country-people, and he was the apostle of Chablois. Henry IV. wished to retain him at his court; Francis preferred to remain in his bishopric, observing that *the court was not the element of prelates*. He even refused a pension which was offered him by this prince.—“I cannot bear,” said he, “an ecclesiastic to complain of poverty: let him remember what he said in the face of the church on receiving the tonsure, that God alone was his inheritance. My revenue is sufficient for my necessities, and more would be superfluous.”

This great bishop possessed also the mildness and indulgent goodness characteristic of true sanctity. He was particularly fond of children, of country-people, and soldiers, whom he always called *our brave defenders*. It was he who said *that conversation ought to resemble water, of which the best and clearest is the simplest: and when we enter into conversation with our neighbour, we ought to be pleased, and to shew that we are pleased*. It was he also who observed, *that to bury the talent of writing, when God has given it to us, is an account which we have to render to God*.

Saint Francis de Sales left an admirable collection of Letters, all of which are extremely interesting.

End of the Notes to volume first.



NOTES

TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

[1]. *Page 6.*

LOUIS de Nogaret de la Vallette was at first Abbé of Saint Victor, afterwards archbishop of Toulouse, then cardinal; but even this dignity could not abate his martial inclinations. The cardinal Richelieu deputed him to fill the first situation in war, the government of Anjou, and that of Metz; he appointed him to command in Germany, with the duke of Weimar, afterwards in Franche Comté, in Picardy, and in Italy: he died in arms at Rivoli, near Turin, at the age of forty-seven. It was in vain the Pope, Urban VIII. had menaced him with a deprivation of the cardinalship, if he continued to bear arms; nothing could induce him to renounce it.

The Pope made this threat in consequence of his being offended with France, and he wished to deprive the kingdom of the military talents of this cardinal. But a reconciliation taking place soon after he heaped benedictions upon him.

It may be added here that at this period in the history of France nothing was more common than to see the sacred robes at the head of armies, encouraging the laity to deeds of courage and glory. Among the most eminent may be mentioned the cardinal Infant, the cardinal of Savoy, Richelieu, la Vallette, Sourdis, archbishop of Bourdeaux, and cardinal Theodore Trivulse, commander of the Spanish cavalry; who all wore the cuirass and served personally.

The Pope sometimes threatened them with excommunication.

[2.] *Page 14.*

It was also Richelieu who caused the palace-royal to be built that was long called Le Palais Cardinal. It is certain

that this great minister patronised all the arts, and that his own genius laid the superstructure of all the brilliance of the succeeding age. He was much reproached for having criticised the *Cid* through the Academy; but this critique of the *Cid*, however unjust in some respects, is still excellent in many others, and by the tone of estimation, the moderation and politeness it mentions throughout, it is a perfect model of the proper manner of writing those kinds of productions. It is very remarkable that our first dramatical *chef-d'œuvre* gave rise to the first good critique which has appeared in our language, and that Richelieu has at once encouraged and drawn from obscurity the father of the French theatre, as well as created the severe but brilliant tribunal which pronounced judgment upon them.

Praise is also due to the authors of the critique on the *Cid* for having evinced sufficient taste to criticise this production of a young poet until then without celebrity, with as much delicacy as consideration, and in a tone as respectful as if they had been written thirty-years later. This presage of all the future greatness of Corneille was a homage equally honorable to the poet and the censors. It was said that Richelieu, from jealousy, had become the enemy of Corneille, who himself thought, as these verses, written after the death of this minister must prove;

Qu'on parle mal ou bien du fameux cardinal,
Ma prose ni mes vers n'en diront jamais rien;
Il m'a trop fait de bien pour en dire du mal,
Il ma trop fait de mal pour en dire du bien.

It was indeed worthy of a great soul, such as Corneille's to forget injury in consideration of the benefits which, not having rejected, he was enjoying, when he wrote those verses.

If Richelieu were envious of Corneille, he still evinced towards him great generosity; he did not even withdraw his pensions, but on the contrary, after his success, he awarded him new gifts. No one saw a trace of the *ill* of which Corneille complained. The critique on the *Cid*, by the Academy, as I have already said, was far from being insulting, it was full of respect: Corneille kept his pension and obtained new favours. The representations of the *Cid* were not interrupted, no kind of cabal disturbed their run. Three years after, and two years before the death of the car-

dinal, Corneille produced "*Les Horaces*," and afterwards "*Cinna*;" both these admirable pieces underwent no criticism; in this procedure there surely appeared neither persecution nor outrage: however, Fontenelle, in the *Life of Corneille*, said, that when the *Cid* appeared, Richelieu, jealous of every species of glory, was as much alarmed as if he had beheld the Spaniards enter Paris, and that he excited all the authors against *this production*. Such declarations are literary exaggerations carried to a ridiculous extent. How is it possible to imagine that the envy and the power of the master of France, the arbiter of Europe, had only been able to produce what was then acting? With regard to the insurrection of authors, omnipotence was not necessary to excite it; on the contrary it is much more likely that all his authority would have been scarcely sufficient to repress it. It appeared very unjust to accuse a minister of this base and weak jealousy who loaded all the celebrated artists with rewards, who with so much splendour patronised every species of talent. History is full of calumny, or evidently absurd exaggerations, and unhappily credited too much to be assiduously sought for and refuted. If this were done with truth and candour, it would be an useful and noble labour;* who could be insensible to the glory of justifying a great man if this could be proved merely a slander?

[3.] Page 14.

It was the cardinal Richelieu who brought Le Poussin to Rome to decorate the great gallery of the Louvre with paintings, and with architecture. He gave him the commission of first artist to the king: Le Poussin arrived at Paris towards the end of 1640. Touquiers, an indifferent painter of landscapes, who is scarcely known except by the nickname of the baron with the long ears, had also a commission which authorised him, he said, to adorn the gallery with his drawings alone. Le Poussin found in him, and in Lemercier, architect to the king, envious and enraged enemies, who through their cabal and intrigues, produced so much disgust and so much chagrin, that this great artist

* Such a work might be entitled, "*A Refutation of some Historical Calumnies*," or "*Researches into Historical Calumnies*."

embraced the resolution to return to Rome, where he was overtaken with a paralytic attack, at the age of sixty-one years. It is unfortunate that a man of great talents should not have had firmness sufficient to resist his enemies, without being overpowered by them, and that he should not have been sensible that with courage and perseverance, genius will always finally triumph over injustice, cabal, and envy.

Poussin was born in 1594, and died in 1665. He was called the Raphael of France. *Le Bellori*, who wrote his life in Italian, composed these verses in honour of his memory.

Parce pius lacrymis, vivit Pussinus in urna,
Vivere qui dederat, nescius ipse mori;
Hic tamen ipse silet; si vis audire loquentem,
Mirum est, in tabulis vivit et eloquitur.

Page 31.

See what Madame de Motteville says, in her *Memoirs* of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

“This brunette beauty had lovely features and much of the agreeable, she also possessed sweetness and firmness of mind. At once affable yet dignified, she it was whom the king loved, and she it was also to whom he more openly spoke on the subject of the cardinal, and on the vexation his power caused him. As this girl had an excellent heart, (though she foresaw in this confidence the certain ruin of her own fortune,) she did not allow herself to be silent on the subject with the prince; she strengthened his aversion for the cardinal, by the influence of that friendship she bore him, observing, that he was dishonoured in permitting himself to be so much subjected to the influence and government of this minister.

The cardinal was indefatigable in endeavouring to gain over every person who was near the king, but she had more resolution and firmness than all the men at court, who had the baseness to give the minister an account of all the king said against him. A mere girl had a far more noble and dignified soul than they. she had the resolution to brave ill-fortune; the king saw in her as much constancy and virtue as beauty—he esteemed and loved her—and I know that he had for her an attachment, very much exalted above the common affection of men. The same sen-

timent which compelled this generous girl to refuse all connexion with the cardinal de Richelieu, caused her to live discreetly with the queen. As the prudence and propriety of the king almost equalled that of the most modest women; it excited in her so much of gratitude, she thought she ought to repay his virtuous friendship with the greatest fidelity, in keeping the secrets confided to her knowledge.” *Madame de Motteville*, vol. 1.

By this recital it may be seen that I have not exaggerated the fine character of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; and it is known, that Madame de Motteville is celebrated for her candour and impartiality. Monsieur de Voltaire distinguishes her, and with reason, as—

The sincere Madame de Motteville; and it is impossible, when her memoirs have been read, for the peruser not to discover that she is fully worthy of this distinguishing appellation. She has described Louis with uniform fidelity. I have been compelled to supply in my romance some particulars of this melancholy picture; but I have preserved all the characteristic traits. What a king was he whose confidence one could not accept without being lost! And who would not be tempted to believe that this last trait is over-drawn, since he made the fortune of his friend the constable of Luynes, Cinq-Mars, a great squire, &c? But it was only the cardinal who protected them. The constable died, Cinq-Mars not only was detached from the cardinal, but conspired against him; his tragical end was well known.

[4.] Page 50.

Boisenval, a subaltern personage, assured of the bond of union between the king and Mademoiselle de la Fayette, betrayed this prince to the cardinal, when he was privately bought over to his interest; and carried those letters that the cardinal had read and re-sealed, without the king entertaining the slightest suspicion of this insolent infidelity. For this refer to the Universal, Historical, and Critical Dictionary, &c. of MM. Chaudon and Delandine, article *La Fayette*.

[5.] Page 61.

Madame de Motteville expressly says, that the queen

was very much hurt by the reserve of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who would not act as Mademoiselle de Hautefort had previously done, and report to her majesty all the confidential communications of the king; and that, after this, she was very coldly treated.

[6.] Page 75.

This infidelity had already been spoken of; see note [4.]

[7.] Page 76.

Nicholas Caussen a Jesuit, was born in 1583. and acquired fame by his sermons and his writings. He was selected to be the confessor of Louis XIII. but having espoused the side of the queen mother and thus taken part against Richelieu, this minister caused him to be exiled to a town in Bretagne. He died at Paris in 1651, regarded as a man of scrupulous probity which nothing could shake. He left several works behind him in French and Latin. 1. A Parallel between Sacred and Profane Eloquence—of which see the opinion of *Gibert* in his *Ingemeas sur les Rhéteurs*. 2. *The Holy Court* a work full of morality, delivered in a vulgar style, accompanied with tales which evince more piety than judgment. It was however translated into several languages, &c. &c.

[8.] Page 85.

This saint, this hero, so sublime in christian charity, extended it even to criminals. Having one day met a galley slave compelled to abandon his wife and children in great poverty, he obtained his liberty by surrendering himself in his place, and he long carried the chain from which he had delivered him. Many pious persons being acquainted with this act, released him from the galleys; but the enormous weight of the chains that he had borne, entailed upon him for life, a considerable swelling of the feet. Afterwards, at his own request, he was nominated chaplain to the galleys: he assuaged the fate of those unhappy beings, and consoled them by sweet exhortations; he established a hospital for them at Marseilles—until then there had been none. On his return to France, he visited criminals in their prisons, and by his endeavours, he rendered their

fate less miserable. He established the first of the missionaries to instruct and preach in the different places, and to bear the light of the gospel among the infidels. He founded a Hospital for the Aged, l'Hôtel Dieu, the Hospital for Foundlings, and the Congregation of the Daughters of the Cross, for the education of poor girls. He established also les Sœurs de Charité. In 1639, he sold every thing he possessed, and sent the produce into Lorraine, which had been ruined by the war: he joined to this gift some considerable alms which he collected from the court, and from different people; these alms, sent repeatedly at different times, amounted to sixteen hundred thousand franks. Besides, he procured subsistence and asylums for many emigrants of Lorraine; he exercised the same charity in regard to the Scotch and the English Catholics persecuted in their own country; soon after he did the same for the poor inhabitants of the frontiers of Champagne, and Picardy, ruined by the war. He distributed among them the amount of six hundred thousand franks. He also dispensed some immense charities in the town of Etampes, devastated by the encampment of the army, and by an epidemic disorder. This excellent saint died at an advanced age, in 1660.*

[9] page 101.

Madame de Motteville thus recounts the disgrace of Mademoiselle de Hautefort. She reports this person as having an imperious character, which, in the end, became insupportable to the queen; she had displayed great proofs of attachment at the time of the persecution. The cardinal caused the queen to suffer; she went disguised as a servant with much danger into a prison, to give at the gate some important advice for her majesty to the valet de chambre who was to be questioned about her. I have supposed that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had caused the recall of Mademoiselle de Hautefort from exile, but the latter did not in reality return to court until after the death of the king.

* I have already mentioned in my *Journal Imaginaire*, the sublime discourse of St. Vincent, which I proposed for the subject of a picture. I could not avoid retracing in this work a character so marked and celebrated, and the more as this repetition occupies in this book only half a page.

[10.] Page 110.

Louis XIV. was not born till after the departure of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; but all the memoirs of Madame de Motteville agree in affirming, that the re-union of the king and queen was effected by her, and consequently the birth of Louis the Great.

[11.] Page 116.

It is true that the king wrote this letter and tendered this strange proposal which aroused Mademoiselle to a sense of the passion of this prince. See the *Universal Dictionary*, the article *La Fayette*.

[12.] Page 139.

The abdication proposed to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, is not a mere supposition. Madame de Motteville decisively mentions it. She derived this information from Mademoiselle herself, whom she often saw at her convent after the death of the king. She took the veil only with the consent of the king, which father Caussin was commissioned to request. The king wept, evinced the liveliest grief, but gave his consent. He went in fact to see her at the convent for a long time afterwards, but he could not, says Madame de Motteville, tear her from the grate. The cardinal became more restless than ever, it was then that he falsified their letters, and interlined in them some shocking words of forged writing which wounded the delicacy and which rendered them cold towards each other, and finally disunited them.

End of the Notes to volume second.

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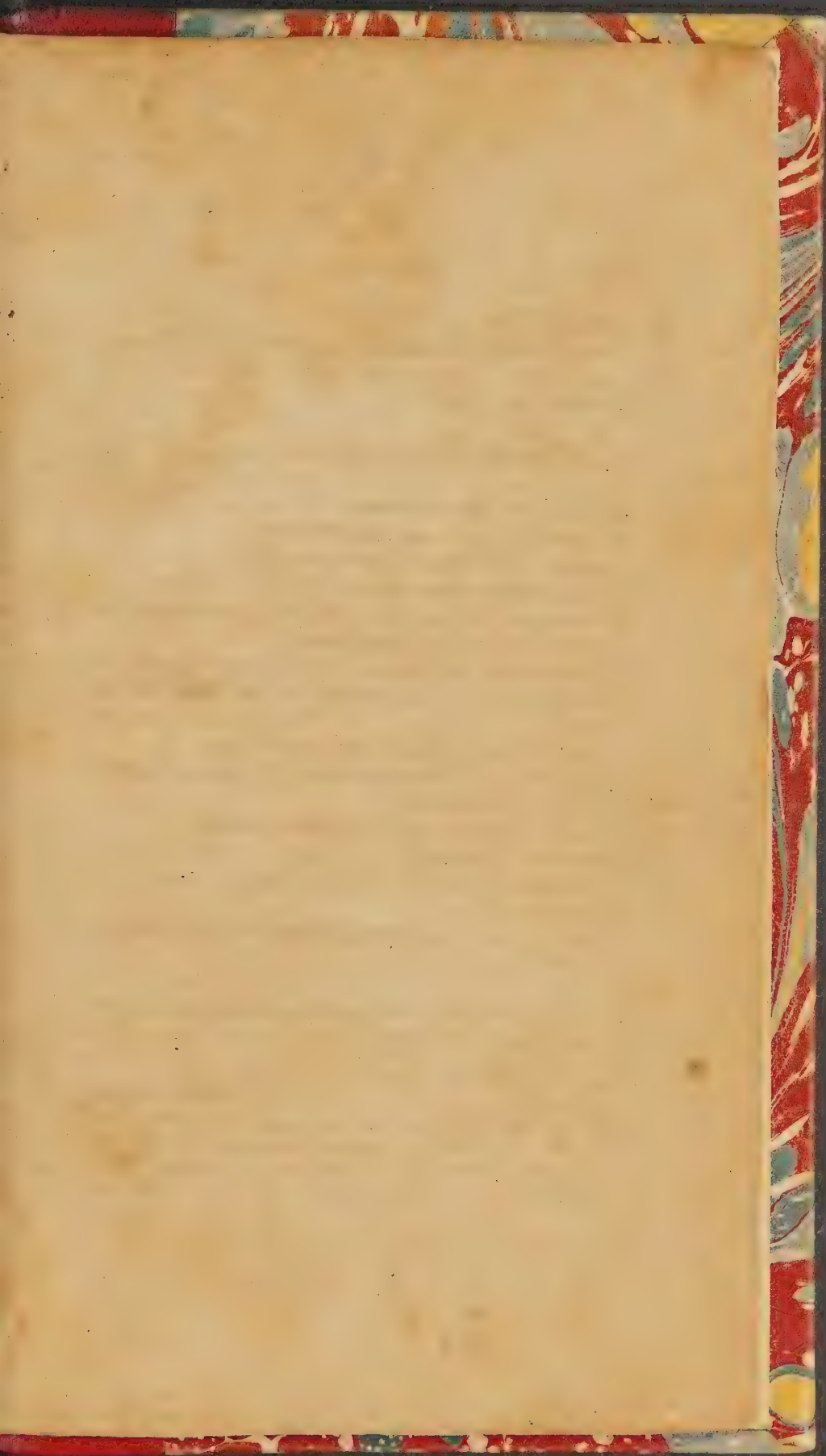
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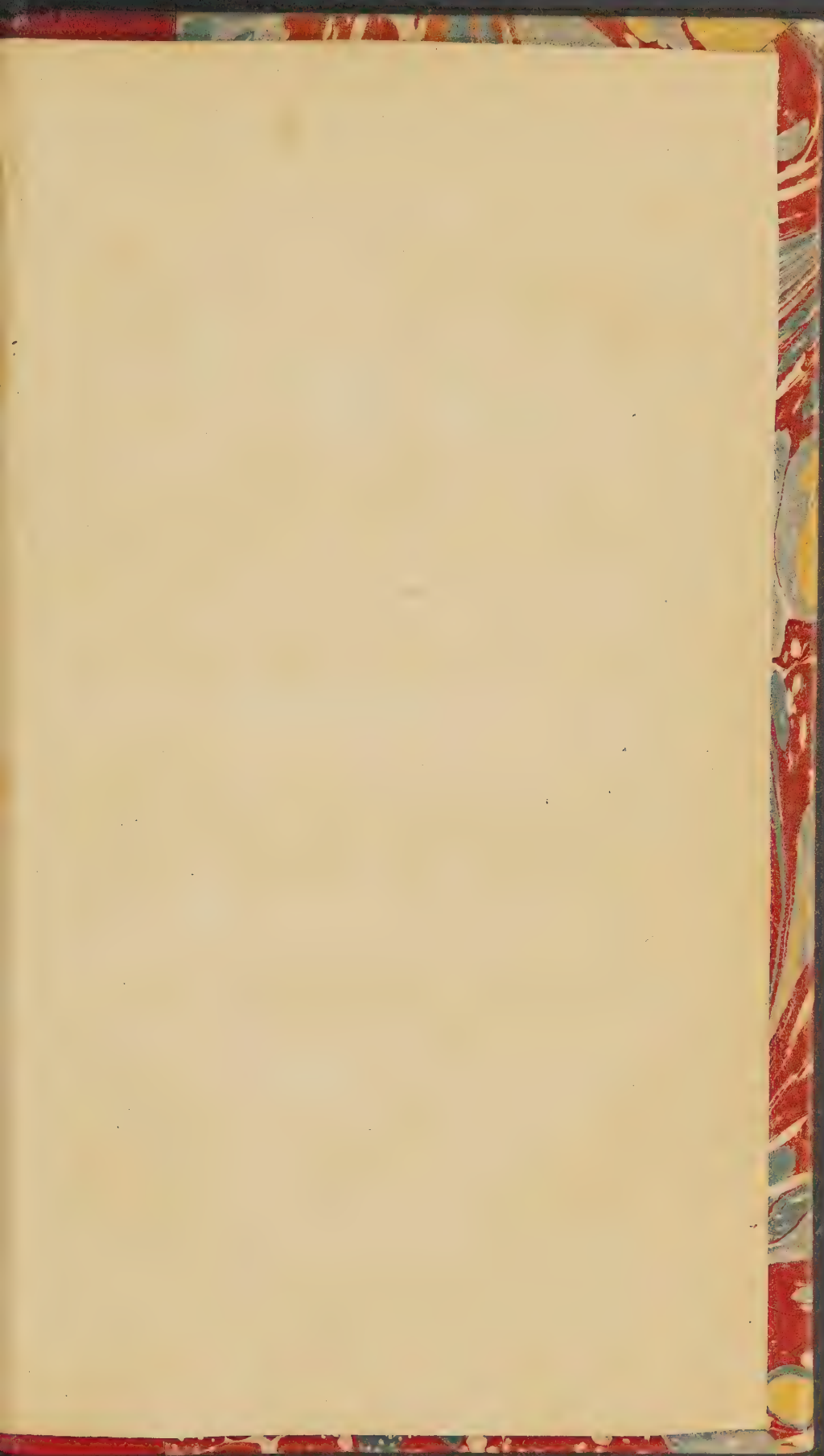
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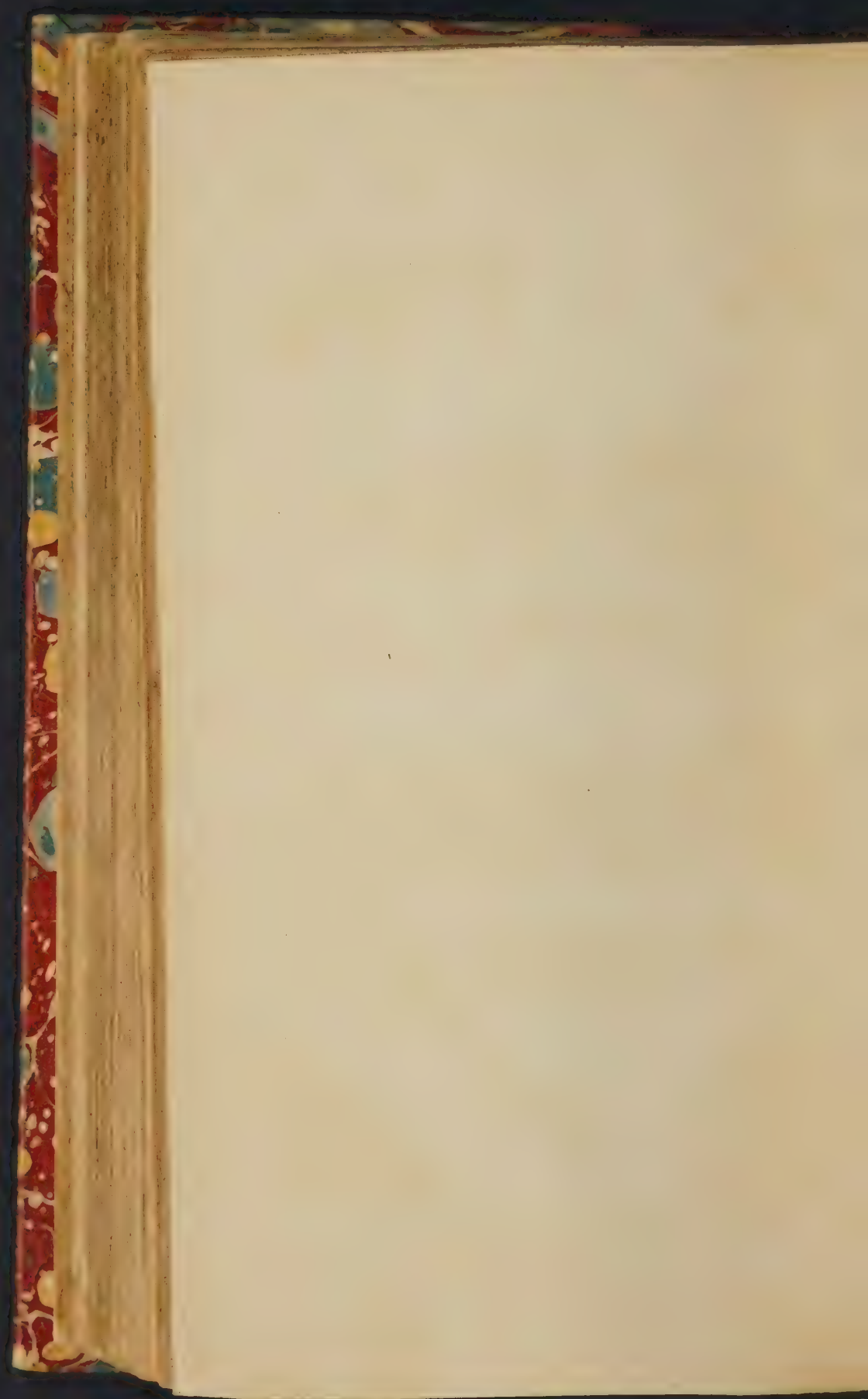
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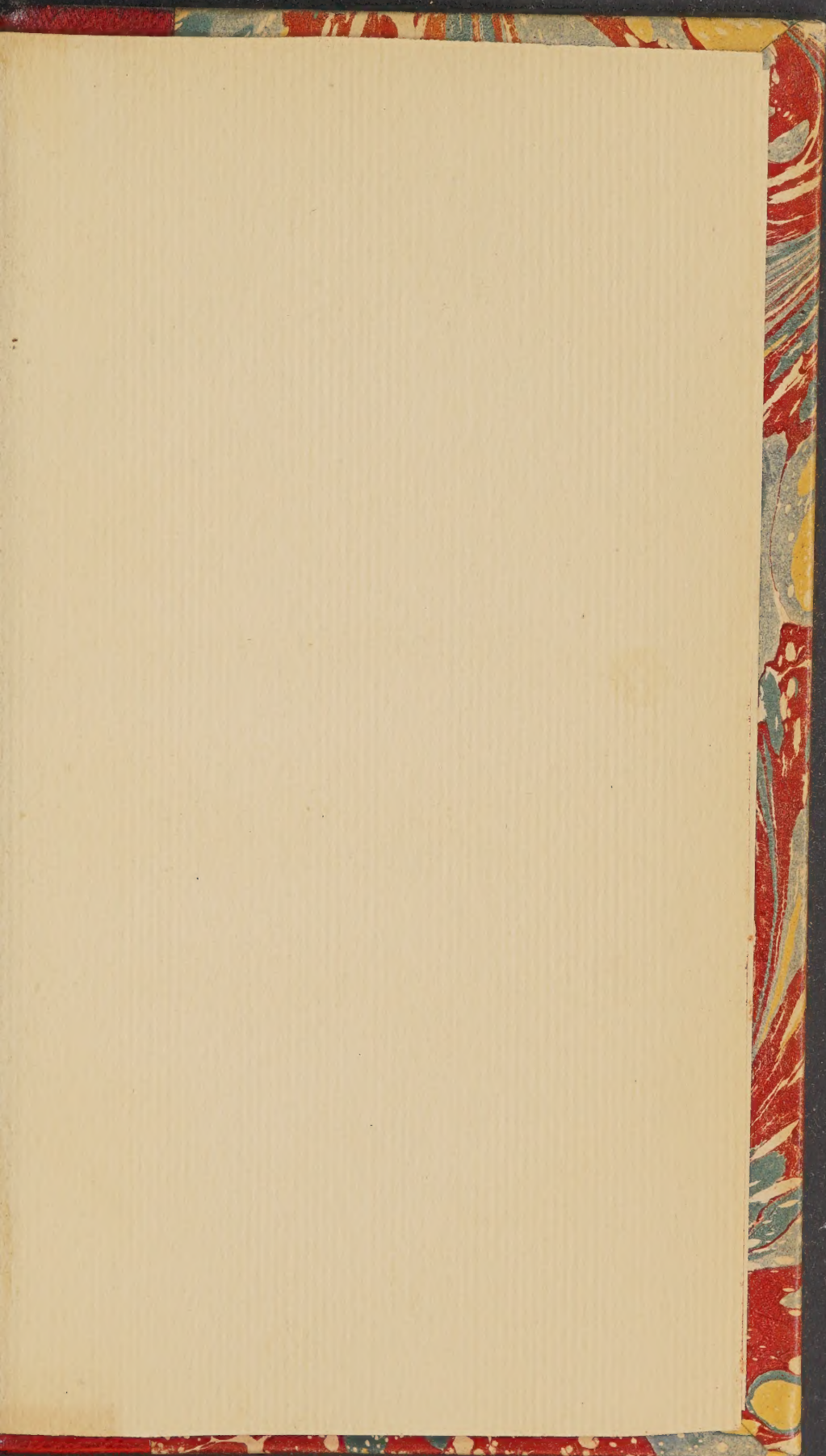
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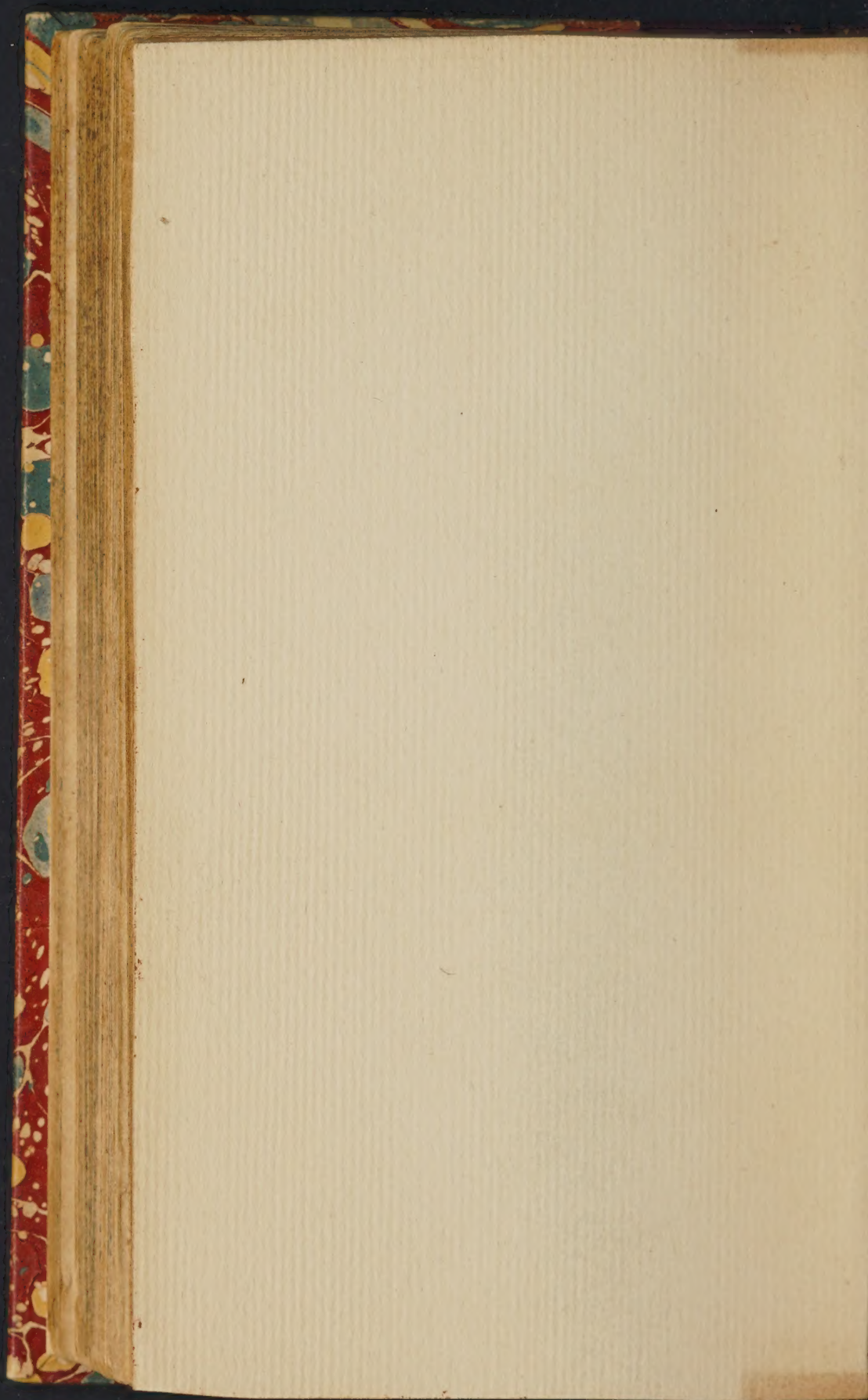












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